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Fulfillment

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NO DOUBT the major part of those who may read this tardy memoir will find there small justification for the title. To them "Frustration" would be more descriptive. I cannot now accept this, for it has the connotation of defeat, of failure, and though while I knew him in my youth I had this sense of, to me, tragic non-fulfillment in my father's life, I realized later that such a feeling was, and must have been, utterly foreign to him. No single thing that personal ambition prompts a man to covet for himself came to his hand. With natural and inherent gifts and potentialities that (again as I thought then) should have made him a national, even a world figure in literature, science, or philosophy — even perhaps in all three — he died at seventy years as utterly unknown to society at large as the least individualized unit in the human aggregate of which he was a part.

In taking the title I have, I reject my own mental attitude of a quarter-century ago, the time of his death. Then it seemed discouraging, tragic, and under the cloud of failure. Since then, with older experience and, I should hope, a better sense of values, the aspect of failure, of frustration, becomes less obvious, and I begin to think it was he who achieved rather than those who have won place and fame from the unwilling gods, and at the price of something lost out of life, something blemished or sacrificed in character that was more worth while than the thing that was gained.

This conviction is really based on what he once said to me when I was first adventuring in the beguiling jungle of literary composition. Something of mine had been rejected by unresponsive publishers, several times I think, though I cannot remember what it was, and when I raged at the incomprehension of literary arbiters (being convinced, as I remember, of the profound importance of what I had produced) he said: "Console yourself with this thought, for I am sure it is the truth. If Emerson, for example, had lived all his life on a desert island, and not a word of his had ever been printed and published to the world, his influence on humanity would have been just as great, provided he had thought his great thoughts, for it is not the material expression that counts, but the antecedent spiritual energy that brought these thoughts into being. They are the reality, and whether they are good or evil, it is they that determine life." If he was right – and if wrong, then it is the first instance I can remember where this could be said of him – if he was right, then his life was characterized not by frustration but by fulfillment.

William Augustine Cram was born in the year 1837 on the old place in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire. Behind him lay just two centuries of farming stock since the first of the line came over from England in

1634, becoming one of the founders of Exeter by charter from King Charles I. It was a great and fortunate generation, the most notable since that which produced the Founders of the Republic. Theirs was the era of constructive thought taking form in action; his of equally constructive thought, though its obvious form was literature, philosophy, and dynamic religion. Both were times of revolution, and I am not sure that the second was not more convulsive and earth-shaking – so far at least as America was concerned. The old selective, aristocratic Republic was in process of progressive destruction at the hands of the new forces that had been let loose through the election of Andrew Jackson and that were to hold control even until today. Simultaneously, however, perhaps even in unconscious efforts to preserve, in another sphere, these same selective, essentially aristocratic ideals, a reverse movement was in process, wholly antipathetic to the new democracy. The brief candle of poetry, romance, pure literature, philosophy, burned brightly with a light that both illumined and vitalized. Two centuries found their fulfillment in intellectual and spiritual energy in a generation.

Simultaneously and inevitably this new fire began to work purgation. Hitherto religion had been of one sort, the Puritanism and Calvinism of the old tradition that, eating into itself in isolation, apart in great measure from the influence of the rationalization that was already at work in eighteenth-century Europe, had become at the same time both acrid and sterile. The current Protestantism of the early part of the century was neither theologically nor ethically a scheme of faith or of life that could under any possible circumstances commend itself to a generation acting under some mysterious impulse towards ideals hitherto outside the province of American society. The tenets of Calvinism, the almost exclusive attention paid to the most scrupulously literal interpretation of the Old Testament; the anthropomorphism that had hidden God in a maze of juridical technicalities; the obvious infamy of such crude dogmas as that of predestination, eternal damnation, and the Protestant version of the doctrines of original sin, the Atonement, and salvation by faith, were matters that, confronted honestly, were bound to be rejected, and so rejected presupposed at once the necessity of finding something to take their place. A problem sufficiently stimulating in itself.

The task was faced squarely, even light-heartedly. Some succeeded in discovering the milder and more gracious offerings of the Episcopal Church with its revealing appeal through a genuine and beautiful literary form, so different to the grim austerity of Puritan formalities and the uncouth jargon of some of the newer forms of Protestantism. Others, more surprisingly still, and more arduously, discovered the Catholic Church and found refuge there. Normally the progress was towards what in the end became Universalism and Unitarianism. By the year 1865 the air was crisp with revolt and for one of lofty character, vivid intellect, philosophical bent, and an all-embracing charity and humanitarianism, there was no escape. It was then that my father sought refuge, or rather a congenial sphere of action, in the Unitarian ministry.

It was in 1866 that he was ordained and "given the right hand of fellowship" (I think that is the phrase) by Dr. Edward Everett Hale. It was my first visit to Boston — I was then three years old — and these are my first lucid memories; quite clear, for instance, are one or two flashes of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" seen at the old Boston Museum where I was inexplicably taken at that tender age. There are those who ask if Annie Clarke played Little Eva on that occasion! I do not know, but the next time I saw her, and often thereafter, and unforgettably, was in the same place and some fifteen years later.

My father was married, in 1862, to a daughter of that Squire Blake of Kensington, of whom I have written elsewhere, and before I was born in the following year, came the first great crisis that called him to a definite stand and after a fashion not to be denied. It was War, a conflict complicated by grave moral questions, or so, as perhaps always happens, it was loudly proclaimed. My grandfather was a strong abolitionist, though with no rancour towards the South. Frank and Sarah Sanborn, my father's cousins, were (and are still) well known for their ardent advocacy of emancipation. The old house in Hampton Falls was an occasional refuge for runaway slaves, while the whole community was united in its advocacy of the war. Another cousin, Captain Frank Porter Cram, was already in the service. I suppose in 1917 my father would have been called a pacifist. At all events, while antagonistic to slavery, he was strongly opposed to war against his own people, even in a good cause. Already he was under the spell of Emerson and Thoreau, that dominating influence that later was to bring him into close sympathy and contact with the Concord School of Philosophy. His clear reason and philosophical bent made him look on war as a brutal and ignoble expedient, except in the case of self-defence. At that time war was waged with some measure of old-time decency. What my father would have thought of modern "mechanized" warfare with its submarines, torpedoes, and airplanes, its high explosives, poison gases, flame-throwers, machine-guns, long-range cannon, its sinking of neutral ships and its warfare on non-combatants, is a question I should like solved to satisfy my own curiosity. War was to him bad enough even as it was then and he would have none of it, particularly against those of his own race and country. Then came the draft – and his name was amongst those drawn.

It was a crisis and a test. He could not abandon his convictions and yet there was the law and the law had to be obeyed. I never knew all the details of the affair which for the moment became a *cause célèbre*. He was taken to Concord, the State Capital, and there interrogated, even being interviewed and laboured with by the Governor. "Yes, he would put on the uniform of the United States, shoulder his gun, obey all orders – except one. He was quite ready to die, if that should happen, but he would never fire a shot against his fellow men." On this ground he stood firmly, and no argument, plea, or threat could shake him. "Very well, then," he was told, "you can buy a substitute." The idea of hiring another to do for a cash payment what he would not do on principle, was to him an offence, and he rejected it at once. It looked like an impasse and the only issue seemed to be a military prison. In the end, his elder brother took a hand, bought the substitute, and saw the recalcitrant idealist return to his home and his study for the ministry. I do not think my father ever quite forgave him for this. In any case, he refused to be a party to the transaction by paying his brother back the cost of the substitute (who, by the way, came through the war unwounded and with credit), but in the end he did so and the episode was closed.

Now when the Unitarian ministry made its insistent call, it found small favour with my father's parents. He was the younger of the two children and their idol. Separation seemed intolerable and when at last a reluctant consent was given, it was with a solemn understanding that when his father and mother felt that they needed him through the oncoming of old age, he should come back to them. The promise was given and the promise was kept.

His first call was to Augusta, Maine, where we remained until about 1872, going thence to Westford, Massachusetts. Already my father was becoming known for his rather striking combination of mysticism and radicalism. On the one hand was the powerful influence of such men as Dr. Hale, Dr. Martineau, James Freeman Clark, Theodore Parker, with the spirit of Channing inspiring all; on the other Swedenborg, William Blake, and some of the German mystics then, I think, first becoming known. It was an interesting interplay of somewhat opposed forces, but at that extraordinary time more than these two agencies were beating upon an avid but rather bewildered generation. "Evolution" was the rallying cry of the emancipated and its repercussions threatened a second "civil war" within the ranks of society. Darwin, Huxley, Tyndal, Spencer, and Haeckel were playing fast and loose with dogmas and old-established ways of thought, and the vivacity of the conflict was not to be equalled even by the "Fundamentalist" riots of a later generation. If this were not enough, a fourth influence impended and one, I think, that gave my father that sense of balance, that critical standard of values that kept him from a bigoted adherence to any one of the current propagandas. "Nothing too much" may be said to have been his rule of life and he achieved this, I am sure, because of his life-long reliance on the spiritual and intellectual leadership of Emerson and of his discovery at this time of Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin. In his small but singularly well-chosen library, the works of all the English evolutionists, of the German philosophers, particularly Kant, Hegel, and Spinoza, and of the liberal and radical religionists, were crowded close to *Modern Painters*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and all the special little russet-brown volumes on social and economic subjects, and to *St. Paul and Protestantism*, *Culture and Anarchy*, *God and the Bible*. Browning came next, with Tennyson and the rest of the Victorian poets.

By the time I was twenty I had read them all, yes, even the seven volumes of the *Synthetic Philosophy*, but in my case, at least, it was Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin who dominated and whose influence for good or ill has lasted longest, and if I can reason backward to my father, I have a strong feeling that in his case also, though more effectively, they were the testing and co-ordinating force. Out of his immersion in Darwinian evolution grew an inordinate interest, that increased even to the day of his death, in biology, geology, palaeontology, and astronomy, and after (as it was to his family) the great catastrophe, it was in these fields of science that he found the greatest scope for his mental adventures and rewards. Indeed, he said to me once that if he had his life to live over again, he would follow physical science as his career. It might have been well, because he had the creative imagination and the wide vision that were not granted to many professional scientists until this day and generation. Physical science, until the last ten years, had usually been as dogmatic as Calvinism, and with hardly more excuse. Now I seem to see the consummation of my father's far-seeing vision in men like Bergson, Ouspensky, Spengler, Keyserling, Einstein, Eddington, Jeans and their fellows. The Huxley-Haeckel period has passed.

I have a curious feeling, perhaps engendered by personal attachment and even veneration, that this vision of wider horizons, this recrudescence of wonder, this sense of mysteries that escape capture and yet lead on by comprehensible implications to an ultimate unity, was somehow given to my father, now some half-century ago. To what we postulate as Inscrutable Wisdom, the time, it seemed, was not ripe, and the vision, or such of it as he could apprehend, died with him, to be re-born in these later days and in a world that bears scant resemblance to the one he knew.

This is why I do not call this essay "Frustration", for I must repeat, the word would have seemed to him, if applied to his life, somewhat ill chosen. He had no sense of failure or defeat, believing as he did that if his inner, unwritten thought was right, it was in itself dynamic and would endure. As a matter of fact, though during the last twenty-five years of his life he wrote incessantly, nothing was ever seen in print. A few fugitive essays in that ephemeral magazine *The Radical* and dating from his early years, occasional contributions to Unitarian periodicals such as the *Christian Register*, this is absolutely all. Much he himself destroyed, for his critical sense was acute and nothing he wrote seemed final or adequate. The rest was lost or carelessly thrown away and of this later work nothing remains, not even enough to say whether or no this is tragedy, nor even to authenticate what I try to claim for him in these belated memorials.

The "catastrophe" of which I have spoken, fell while we were living in Westford, where, as the minister of the Unitarian parish and as a leader in the more advanced and stimulating thought of the time, he was just becoming known. It was, I think, in the year 1878 that word suddenly came that his father and mother, now convinced of their age and infirmity – erroneously as I have always been persuaded – invoked the promise he had made when he left them to follow his own life in the world, and called him home. I do not know if there was any regret or searching of the heart, so far as he himself was concerned, but there was no sign. For my mother it was a bitter blow, for she was ambitious and, in her own way, as brilliant intellectually as he. The door of a creative and beneficent career had opened, and with suddenness and finality had closed. For the three children it meant curtailed education, the dissipation of any dreams of college, and an implacable return to the farm in a village of a few hundred people. For there was no hesitation as to what was to be done. The pastorate in Westford was resigned and to Hampton Falls we went, for a solemn promise had been given and at any cost that promise was to be kept.

The life to which he returned after a dozen years of, as it certainly was at that time, the dignity and distinction of a Unitarian pastorate, the literate and cultivated society, the recognized position of leadership, was in its obvious aspects that of a simple New England farmer. There were the acres to be cultivated and made as productive as possible under the circumstances, the cattle to be tended, the "chores" to be done; the unearthly early hours, the hard manual labour in field and forest, the comparative isolation from the flowing currents of culture, the varied adventures of a post-war world. There were occasional calls for marriages and funerals, and at intervals in the summer, preaching in the local Unitarian church, which, like so many of that ilk in the country towns, after an enthusiastic beginning fifty years before, had fallen into lethargy. Hampton Falls was originally the "Falls parish" of Hampton, the "court end" of that ancient township, with Kensington, Seabrook, and other sections set off under autonomous governments. In the great liberal upheaval of the thirties, the old church of Theophilus Cotton and other distinguished Congregational worthies, had gone over to Unitarianism, and the meeting house of that time with its fine, albeit wooden, Doric portico, had been none too large for the faithful. Now twenty or thirty, of a pleasant Sunday in summer, made a good congregation, and to them my father preached on occasion. Indeed he was, I believe, the last regular minister, but his duties could hardly have been arduous. I have sometimes wondered how his limited congregation took his mystical, humanitarian, and deeply philosophical sermons. With more appreciation, I fancy, than would be the case today, or then, in the majority of country parishes, for Hampton Falls has always been marked by a curiously high mental quality amongst the better part of its inhabitants.

Even this modest pastoral function came to an end, for inherent mysticism and philosophical apprehension steadily encroached on doctrinal regularity. Formal Unitarianism went by the board and in its place came a new sense of the values to be found in earlier forms of Christianity and of the mystical quality inherent in religion itself and in its outward manifestations. When I told him that I found I must abandon the system in which I had been brought up, in favour of what I held to be the real Catholicism of Christianity, he gravely remarked that he was very glad; that to him his own church had abandoned the greater part of what was good and beneficial in religion in its insistence on a purely intellectual test of values and a non-emotional and non-aesthetic form of service, and that if I thought I had found something better he could only offer me his congratulations.

Obviously then, it would seem, there was nothing left but the uninspiring combination of the work of a day-labourer on the farm and the few formal duties attached to a moribund religious society in a decreasing agricultural community. The interesting point is that this was neither all nor even the major part. There remained three things: books, thought, and meditation, and these became, over and above family cares, the predominant factors in what was really a dual life.

Books were my father's one extravagance and they multiplied prolifically. Both he and my mother were French and German scholars and every night almost, particularly in the winter, one or the other read aloud, first an hour of English, then an hour of either one of the other languages, while I sat by, when I was at home, making impossible designs for (fortunately) impossible architectural structures.

In the garden, under the gigantic elm – which still stands, though hardly – was the old shoe-shop. The institution itself demands a word of explanation since its function was abolished more than a generation ago. A part of the admirable economy of the first half of the nineteenth century in New England – at least in Rockingham County – was this same shoe-shop. Before the days of shoe-machinery and mass-production, the farmers used their spare time – which was considerable in winter – sewing and pegging and "buffing" shoes, whereby they had something to occupy their leisure and add a measurable amount to their narrowly restricted income. The soles and uppers, et cetera, were sent out in great boxes from Lynn or Haverhill, together with a vast supply of wax, thread, leather, and all the many and interesting tools of the trade, and the various items of raw material were assembled and then returned to the general manufacturers. Usually all the men of the family, sometimes neighbours also, came together in one shop for their labours, and as these were not such as demanded close mental application, the result was that the entire time was occupied in discussing every possible social, political, and theological question. There was the pleasant smell of soaking leather, the whistle of the "waxed end" on its way through the stock, the tap, tap of hammers, the soothing sough of the "buffer", and as I remember it the incessant, tolerant, thoughtful conversation of grandfather, father, and uncle whilst I sat on the delicious-smelling floor absorbed with cobblers wax, pegs, and such of the bright tools as I could borrow or filch. It is often said that the town meeting was the nursery of American statesmanship, and I am not sure that the old shoe-shop was not the nursery of much of the sound culture that was to be found in the New England country towns in the first half of the last century.

In time the institution passed with the advent of labour-saving machines and the resulting capitalism. The building itself remained, however, and this my father made into his study. Books came to cover the walls, arm chairs took the place of the high stools, papers of every sort covered the benches, and on one side strange drawings and diagrams appertaining in some way to geological and astronomical problems covered the wall in ever changing sequence as my father pondered on all the unsolvable problems of the cosmos and tried to elucidate them to himself by these curious designs in bright and varied colours. What did they all mean? I never knew, for at that time I was too indifferent even to ask, and death overtook the contemplative author before I ever had the sense to try to find out. I should not be surprised if my father was the last to employ himself at shoe-making, for before the transformation in the shop took place, I can remember sitting there while he worked alone with pegs and hammer and waxed-ends, the while he strove with the most indifferent success to drive into my head the elements of Latin and the fundamentals of Caesar and Virgil. In the later days, however, the hammer was silent, the efforts at my education abandoned. Flowering vines grew up over the windows, there was a pleasant scent of books and papers, a cat dozing on the littered bench, and my father with his over-long hair and untended beard, sitting in his easy chair reading, reading it would seem interminably or standing at his desk writing with equal assiduity. What things I never knew, for they were written only to be destroyed or thrown into a neglected corner in pursuance of that theory of his of which I already have spoken, that the formulated thought was the dynamic force, the printer's ink and paper and type only what his Calvinistic forebears would have called "an act of supererogation".

I do not know if I have proved my first contention: that "Frustration" would have been a title ill chosen for its purpose. Creative thought is a great mystery and the Brahman may be right in holding it a greater power. The world is an arid ossuary of the shards of things done; conceived in high ambition, wrought out arduously in time and space, shattered and fallen at last and become one with the sand of the desert. The arts of Egypt are museum material; of the temples of Greece only the stylobates stand. It is a commonplace that the great empires cemented in blood and sweat, and reaching back through all recorded history, have left no more enduring trace. But the thought that created has endured and from time to time grows into new vigour, to inspire and to lead on even to new creative activity. The material thing – yes, even time, space, personality – may be but Maya, illusion;

but thought is the abiding reality behind the show.

In this sense my father, and those others who with him in the fecund years of the mid-nineteenth century lived in their cloud-castles of thought and meditation, yet "mute, inglorious" won no place in fame or history, were the real creators of power. We of later generations who hammer out the visible thing, proud of our fleeting accomplishment, are but the mechanical executives. If this is so, then it is not our technological accomplishments that will count in time and be the foundation-stones of new history, but the thought that we engender, whether this is good or bad, and pass on to other and later hands to give it material form.

The Pillars of Agrarianism

FRANK L. OWSLEY

SINCE the appearance of *I'll Take My Stand* in 1930, the Agrarians have been subjected to a fusillade of criticism. I suspect that our philosophy as set forth in that book and in later essays, published in certain periodicals, especially in the Distributist-Agrarian AMERICAN REVIEW, has irked the devotees of our technological civilization. Venturing an even stronger word, it begins to appear that the doctrines announced in *I'll Take My Stand* have actually *infuriated* these people. Just recently, on an important examination for a certain scholarship, it seems that the Committee inquired of each candidate what he thought of agrarianism. It was noteworthy that the successful candidate summed up his opinion by saying that the advocates of such a system were "cockeyed". One of the candidates who was not only rejected, but was urged not to apply again on the grounds of age (he has just celebrated his twenty-second birthday, and the age limit of the scholarship is several years above this age) answered that as far as he understood it he heartily approved of agrarianism. The most recent and, perhaps, the most violent attack upon the advocates of an agrarian state is that of H. L. Mencken. While Mencken's attack is so violent and lacking in restraint that it does not fall far short of libel, I have no desire to single him out as a critic worthy of an answer. However, I must confess that Mencken's attack, because it is typical – outside of the billingsgate

– of those coming from the pillars of Industrialism, has prompted, to a certain extent, this essay. Such essays as his, appearing with amazing regularity, have without doubt troubled the mind of the neophyte, and, in many cases, have utterly confused him and made him lose sight of the principles and specific objectives of agrarianism.

Few if any of the Agrarians have expended any effort in answering the criticism of those who attack our principles. From the beginning we have pursued the attack rather than the defence; nor have we – if I may continue the military figure of speech – seen fit to consolidate our positions. However, it seems to me very proper, at the present time, for the sake of those who have been confused, or those whom we hope to draw into our way of thinking, to restate and elaborate the fundamental economic and political principles on which an agrarian society will probably have to rest in the United States, and most particularly in the South.

I shall not attempt to restate and discuss all the principles and programmes of our hoped-for agrarian society, for this, as John Crowe Ransom has said in another connection, would indeed institute an infinite series. My purpose is to confine my discussion to the five great pillars upon which this society will have to rest. Before going into an exposition of the foundation of a restored agrarianism in the South (or other regions), it will be well to restate our definition of an agrarian state as set forth in the introduction of *I'll Take My Stand*:

> Opposed to the industrial society is the agrarian, which does not stand in particular need of definition. An agrar-

ian society is hardly one that has no use at all for industries, professional vocations, for scholars and artists and for the life of the cities. Technically, perhaps, an agrarian society is one in which agriculture is the leading vocation, whether for wealth, for pleasure, or prestige – a form of labour that is pursued with intelligence and leisure, and that becomes the model to which the other forms approach as well as they may.

I shall edit this definition. We had in mind a society in which, indeed, agriculture was the leading vocation; but the implication was more than this. We meant that the agrarian population and the people of the agricultural market towns must dominate the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the state and give tone to it. Today, the Scandinavian countries are fair examples of such a state. France before the World War was a most beautiful example, where 30,000,000 people lived on the land and 10,000,000 lived in the towns and cities engaging in commerce and industry. Even today, after the disastrous War and its effects upon mechanization of industry, France presents the best balanced economic system of any first-class nation in the world. The ownership of property is more widely distributed there than in any nation comparable in wealth and population. Governments may rise and fall, but the French peasant and farmer seems eternal when compared to those of the United States. Today there are about 350,000 persons unemployed in France as against hardly less than 12,000,000 in the United States. Yet the United States has less than three times as large a population as France.

Before entering into the details of our fundamental programme, let me say that we are not exotics, nor a peculiar sect living in a vacuum, untouched by public affairs, merely irked by the noise of factory wheels and machinery. We fully realize that our programme cannot be put into operation until matters affecting the nation as a whole are set aright. Everything which affects the agrarian interests also touches industry, finance, and commerce. Our programme, therefore, intimately involves national problems. We are on the side of those who know that the common enemy of the people, of their government, their liberty, and their property, must be abated. This enemy is a system which allows a relatively few men to control most of the nation's wealth and to regiment virtually the whole population under their anonymous holding companies and corporations, and to control government by bribery or intimidation. Just how these giant organizations should be brought under the control of law and ethics we are not agreed. We are, however, agreed with the English Distributists that the most desirable objective is to break them down into small units owned and controlled by real people. We want to see property restored and the proletariat thus abolished and communism made impossible. The more widespread is the ownership of property, the more happy and secure will be the people and the nation. But is such a decentralization in physical property as well as in ownership possible? We are confident that it is, however much we may differ among ourselves as to the degree of decentralization that will prove desirable in any given industry. We are all convinced, though we hold no doctrinaire principles as to method, that these robber barons of the twentieth century will have to be reduced and civilized in some form or other before any programme can be realized by our state and Federal governments.

While we are deeply interested in the whole nation, yet, as Agrarians and Southerners, we are not desirous of launching a crusade to convert or coerce the other sections of the country into our way of thinking. We therefore, while inviting all who wish, to go with us, have a fundamental programme for the South to which I have referred as the five pillars of agrarianism.

II

The first item in our agrarian programme is to rehabilitate the population actually living on the soil. This farming population falls into several categories: large and small planters; large and small farmers, both black and white; black and white tenants who own their stock and tools, and rent land; black and white tenants who own no stock or tools, but are furnished everything and get a share of the crop for their labour. Finally, there is the wage-hand either coloured or white who is furnished a house, and perhaps food and a certain cash wage.

Today the farm population in the South whether wage-hand or large planter is in a precarious and often miserable state. The exploitations by the industrial interests through high tariffs and other special favours from the Federal government, which force the farmer to buy in a protected market and sell in a world market, and the periodic industrial depressions following in close order since the Civil War, have greatly oppressed the Southern agricultural population. The majority of the planters do not really own their lands;

the real owners are the life insurance companies or the banks. The payment of the interest on his mortgage leaves the almost mythical landowner little on which to subsist. Repayment of the principal is out of the question. Actually, most of the planters are without credit, and are no better off than the tenant or share-cropper. In fact the renter and share-cropper frequently come out of debt with some cash, their corn, sorghum, potatoes, pigs, cows, and other live stock above the board. The fate of the small or large farmer is much better. As a rule he is thrifty, owes less than the other classes, and lives to a great extent off his farm. Sometimes he sends his children to college, especially the agricultural college. His house is usually comfortable and sometimes painted. For the farmer as a class, there is less need of state intervention in his affairs than in the affairs of the tenant and planter classes. Yet a new political economy is necessary for him as well as the planters and tenants, or he will eventually lose his land and status. This new political economy will be discussed later. As for the planter class, there are many whom even the new political economy cannot save. Their equity in the once broad acres which they held in fee simple is too small. It will be best for them to liquidate and begin over as small farmers under the plan which I shall presently offer in connection with the tenant farmers.

The most serious problem, however, is not the bankrupt planters but the tenant-farmers, black or white, because of their great number. I do not know the exact ratio between the tenant-farmer class and the landholding class; but I have heard it said that 75% of the population living on the land in the South are tenants. If this estimate is too high, it will not long remain so unless strong measures are taken, for the tenant class has been increasing so rapidly in recent years that it threatens to engulf the entire agricultural population of the South. Most of the white tenants were once landowners, but have been thrust near to the bottom of the economic and social order by the loss of their lands through industrial exploitation, depression, and, frequently, through high pressure salesmanship of radio, automobile, and farm machinery agents. Industrialism has persuaded, or created a public opinion which has virtually driven, the farmer to accept industrial tastes and standards of living and forced him to mortgage and then to lose his farm. Battered old cars, dangling radio aerials, rust-eaten tractors, and abandoned threshing machines and hay balers scattered forlornly about are mute witnesses to the tragedy of Industrialism's attempt to industrialize the farmer and planter.

A portion of the lower class of white tenants, especially the adults, are beyond redemption. Through diseased tonsils, adenoids, unbalanced rations, tuberculosis, hook worm, malaria, and the social diseases, many have been made into irresponsible, sometimes — but not often — vicious people who are lacking in mental alertness and the constancy of will to enable them to till the soil without close supervision. Such people would not be able to make a living on land which might be granted or sold to them on easy terms by the government. However, the county and state public health departments should be enabled to take the steps necessary to salvage the children of such families in order that they may become owners of small farms and good citizens when of proper age. It is this class of whites in particular, who own no stock, plant no gardens, raise no chickens, who are frequently and perhaps accurately described as the "po' white trash".

The higher class white tenants, those who own their stock and cattle and have their gardens and truck patches, are ready to become the proprietors of farms. Frequently they are good farmers and send their children through the high schools. They are probably in the majority in most of the Southern states and, as I have suggested, their families have been landowners: they were, in short, once a part of the Southern yeomanry; and for a nation or section to allow these people to sink lower and lower in the social and economic scale is to destroy itself.

As for the Negro tenant class, the majority of the Agrarians agree that the really responsible farmers among them who know how to take care of the soil and who own their own stock and cattle, should be made proprietors of small farms.

The planters and large farmers who are left after liquidating their debts will still have an abundance of tenants who work well under supervision, but who are irresponsible and incapable of taking care of themselves without supervision. In the South, the wage-hand is usually the son of a tenant. He is frequently young and more intelligent than the lower tenant class. He should, where his intelligence and sense of responsibility permit, be homesteaded like the better-class tenant. Otherwise, he should be kept where he is, under the supervision of one who has good judgement and a sense of responsibility.

Now, instead of the Federal or state government spending $2500 in building a house for the homesteaders, with whom they are very gingerly experimenting, and several hundred dollars on small tracts of land, let the national and state governments buy up all the lands owned by insurance companies and absentee landlords – which are being destroyed rapidly by erosion – and part of the land owned by the large planters who are struggling to save a portion of their lands, and give every landless tenant who can qualify, 80 acres of land, build him a substantial hewn log house and barn, fence him off twenty acres for a pasture, give him two mules and two milk cows and advance him $300 for his living expenses for one year. By this means 500,000 persons can be rehabilitated in one year at $1,500 a family or $300 per person. An outright gift of the land is advocated to the homesteader with one condition attached: the land must never be sold or mortgaged, and when abandoned it should automatically escheat to the state which should be under immediate obligation to rehabilitate another worthy family.

The next step would be to bring the technologically unemployed, intelligent city people back to the country. First, those who have had experience as farmers should be rehabilitated; next, but relatively few at a time, those without experience should be permitted to become tenants on plantations, whereupon, if such tenants and their families should feel that they would like to go on, the government should grant them a homestead with sufficient stock and cattle and enough cash to subsist them one year. It seems quite clear to the Agrarians that technological unemployment is destined to increase with rapid acceleration until the majority of the population once employed in industry will be thrown out of the system. The government will be faced with perhaps three alternatives: it could put these permanently unemployed on a dole — until the government becomes bankrupt or an orderly slave state is established; it could refuse the dole and have a revolution; or it could rehabilitate the unemployed by giving them small farms. We, as interested citzens of the United States, urge this last policy upon the government as the only permanent relief from permanent technological unemployment. As Agrarians we urge it as an opportunity to restore the healthy balance of population between city and country, which will aid in the restoration of agrarianism and in the restoration and preservation of civilization.

Next in order of importance but simultaneous with the first step should be the rehabilitation of the soil. We, in common with the agricultural colleges of the country, urge that small and large farmer, small and large planter, regard the enrichment and preservation of the soil as a first duty. Those who own the soil must be held accountable in some way for their stewardship. Undrained, unterraced, single-cropped land, and lack of reforestation, should be *prima facie* evidence that the homesteader is not a responsible person and his land should, after fair warning and action in Chancery Court, escheat to the state. As for those farmers and planters who acquire their land by purchase or inheritance, a heavy suspended fine should be imposed upon them; and unless the planter or farmer remedies the abuses within a reasonable time or gives good reason why he has not been able to do so, the fine should be collected. The county agent and three men appointed by the state department of agriculture, should serve in each county as a kind of court to pass on such matters, and appeal from their decision should be allowed to go to Chancery Court. In short, land must be conserved for future generations and not exploited, as has too often been the practice, by the present owners. Another drastic proposal which would aid in conserving the land as well as preventing its being alienated or becoming encumbered with debt, is that by state constitutional amendment, no land could be mortgaged, except by consent of a court of equity; nor should any kind of speculative sale be permitted. It must become impossible for land to be sold to real estate and insurance companies or banks. In thus making alienation of the soil difficult and its proper management necessary, I am suggesting a modified form of feudal tenure where, in theory, the King or state has a paramount interest in the land.

When the rehabilitation and conservation of the soil and stability of tenure have been provided for, the next consideration must be the products of the soil.

Subsistence farming must be the first objective of every man who controls a farm or plantation. The land must first support the people who till it; then it must support their stock. In the olden days when there were no money taxes or mortgages to meet, nor automobiles and fine carriages to buy, nor life and fire insurance to keep up, and when the priest and the teacher were paid in kind, this type of farming, if carried on with the scientific knowledge available today, would have supported the grandest of establishments. But today, a minimum outlay of cash is necessary even for those fortunate souls who are without debts: taxes, insurance, clothing, certain articles of luxury, and medical attention require cash.

After subsistence come the money crops. In the South these crops, too often planted at the expense of the subsistence crops, are peanuts, rice, sugar cane, tobacco, and cotton. Cotton and tobacco, the two leading staples, can be raised in the South in almost limitless quantities and must always depend, to a large extent, upon the foreign or world market. Considerable talk has been going its rounds concerning the danger of losing the foreign market because of crop limitation. Crop limitation, however, has no bearing at the present time, at least, upon the problem of cotton and tobacco. There are between nine and twelve million surplus bales of cotton and large quantities of tobacco above current crops, stored in the United States; and there can hardly be any question about loss of world markets because of crop limitation when we are unable to dispose of this terrific surplus. Further, considerable alarm has been expressed concerning the inability of American cotton growers to compete with Russia, Egypt, Brazil, Turkey, China, and India. This is a groundless fear, for even in the days when the South produced the scrub variety of cotton, the world depended largely upon American cotton, because, with the exception of limited areas in Egypt, the Sudan, and South Africa, no part of the world could raise as much cotton per acre or as good a fibre as the American South. Now that Coker of South Carolina and other plant breeders have produced an upland staple with a fibre about two inches in length, which will grow on any soil in the South, and which is being rapidly introduced everywhere, there can hardly be any serious competition with the South, as far as cheapness of production, quality, and quantity are concerned.

Everything being equal in the world markets, the South could soon drive its competitors out, as it did until past the turn of the century when other factors entered. These factors will have to be dealt with intelligently by the government of the United States or by the regional governments to be discussed later, else the South will be wiped out economically. One factor is that within the last twenty years America has ceased to be a debtor nation and become a creditor. As a debtor we shipped cotton to England, France, or Germany which created foreign exchange with which to pay the principal and interest on our debts and purchase foreign goods. The South could raise large cotton and tobacco crops and be sure that the world markets would take all. As soon as we became a creditor we could no longer ship our cotton and tobacco with the assurances of a sale. England and Germany and France and even Japan, wherever possible, have bought cotton from those countries which owed them money. This loss of a foreign market was seemingly made permanent by the rising tariff scale in America, which effectually cut off foreign goods from our markets, and thereby destroyed the chief sources of foreign exchange in this country with which Southern staples could be bought. The tariff, which was a guarantee of the home markets for the industrial interests of the country, principally located in the East and a belt following the Great Lakes, has been the greatest permanent factor in destroying the foreign market on which the South chiefly depended.

It must be said, at this point, that such a situation was envisaged in 1833 when South Carolina nullified the tariff law of 1832, and again when the Southern states seceded from the Union in 1861. The belief that industrialism, as soon as it got control of the Federal government, would not only exploit agriculture but would destroy the South was behind the whole secession movement. Today, we Agrarians witness the fulfillment of the jeremiads of Robert Barnwell Rhett and John C. Calhoun. We, however, are not hoping for or advocating another break-up of the Union; but we are demanding a fair hearing for the fundamental cause of the South – now that slavery can no longer befog the real issue. If the industrial interests continue the monopoly of the home market and thereby cause the agricultural South (and West) to pay a much higher price for goods than the world price level, we must have a *quid pro quo*: a subsidy on every bale of cotton and pound of tobacco or other important agricultural products shipped abroad, based on the difference between world and domestic prices. In order that foreign countries shall have sufficient American exchange with which to purchase our staple farm exports we further insist that all farm products and raw material shipped into the United States be used in creating foreign exchange with which cotton and tobacco may be purchased and exported. (James Waller in *A New Deal for the South* suggests this technique of establishing parity between agriculture and industry.) In short, the South – and, if I may be so bold as to speak for the agrarian interests of another section, the West – must have agriculture put upon the same basis as industry.

III

With such political economy the South would soon become one of the most important parts of the world, and it would add much to the prosperity of the other sections of the country. It is doubtful, however, whether such intelligent legislation is possible under a government so dominated by particular sectional interests.

For that reason – which is founded upon the history of the last one hundred and forty-six years – we are striving for a new constitutional deal which will help put the several sections on equal footing and prevent the exploitation of one by the other. We are in the front ranks of those who insist that the United States is less a nation than an Empire made up of a congeries of regions marked off by geographic, climatic, and racial characteristics. It has been suggested that New England would form a distinct region, the Middle States another, the Middle West another, the Rocky Mountain and Pacific States another, perhaps, and the South another. Of course the region to which a state wished to affiliate would be determined by a plebiscite. W. Y. Elliott of Harvard suggests that the regional governments be granted the present powers of the states, and that the states themselves be deprived of anything save administrative functions. He further suggests that one set of courts should serve both as Federal and state courts, thus eliminating the maze of courts by which justice is delayed and defeated and encouragement thereby given to lynch law.

Mr. Elliott suggests that in the new set-up the Federal government retain its present powers much more clearly defined. He further urges that all concurrent powers be eliminated. As far as I know, Mr. Elliott is not an agrarian; but his plan is essentially what the Agrarians have urged constantly, except in the matter of division of power between Federal and regional governments. His plan seems very reasonable and conservative. Something like it will have to be adopted if the United States is to endure. The Agrarians, I believe, advocate that, in the redivision of powers in a new constitutional convention, the regional governments should have much more autonomy than the states have ever had. The Federal government should have supreme control over war and peace, the army and navy, interregional or even interstate commerce, banking, currency, and foreign affairs. On the other hand, the sections should have equal representation in the Federal legislative body and in the election of the president and in the cabinet. The legislative body should be composed of a senate only and should be elected by the regional congresses. Finally, the regions should have control of the tariff: that is, the several regions should have an equal share in making the tariff, which would be in the form of a treaty or agreement between all the sections, somewhat in the fashion of the late Austro-Hungarian tariff treaties. In case one region, say the South, failed to agree to the tariff treaty, then the South should be exempted from the operation of the law until an agreement could be reached. Such an arrangement does not mean that there would be interregional tariffs; it does mean that, if the South should have a lower tariff than the other regions, goods imported through the South from abroad would have to pay an extra duty on entering the other regions operating under the treaty. There would be some smuggling across the Potomac and Ohio, but not any more than through Mexico and Canada.

The Supreme Court, like the proposed Senate, should have equal representation from all the sections, regardless of political parties, and the members of the Supreme Court should not be the creatures of the Senate or the President, but, like the Senate, should be appointed by the regional governors subject to the ratification of the regional legislature, which also should be only a senate. The courts — that is, courts of appeal and circuit courts — should be constituted regionally, but should be considered both Federal and regional, sitting one time as Federal and one time as regional.

In our Agrarian programme, not only does it seem necessary to grant more local autonomy because of differences of economic interest, but because of differences on social and racial interests as well. Under such a government, the Civil War would not have been possible, nor would Reconstruction and the ensuing difficulties and hatreds have arisen. And what is more to the point at the present time, Communist interference in the Southern courts, and even conservative interference from other sections, would hardly take place. In other words, the Agrarians — who come nearer representing the opinion of Southern people than do newspapers largely subsidized by Northern-owned power companies and Wall-Street-owned banks, or the Southern liberals fawning for the favour of these corporations or of other powerful Northern groups – believe that under regional government each section will find it less difficult to attend to its own social and economic problems, and thereby will be encouraged to restore the old friendships which were crippled or destroyed under our present system.

Let me sum up. The five pillars on which it would appear that an agrarian society must rest are: (1) The restoration of the people to the land and the land to the people by the government purchasing lands held by loan companies, insurance companies, banks, absentee landlords, and planters whose estates are hopelessly incumbered with debt, and granting to the landless tenants, who are sufficiently able and responsible to own and conserve the land, a homestead of 80 acres with sufficient stock to cultivate the farm, and cash enough to feed and clothe the family one year; (2) The preservation and restoration of the soil by the use of fines and escheat, and by making land practically inalienable and non-mortgageable – that is by restoring a modified feudal tenure where the state had a paramount interest in the land and could exact certain services and duties from those who possessed the land; (3) The establishment of a balanced agriculture where subsistence crops are the first consideration and the money crops are of secondary importance; (4) The establishment of a just political economy, where agriculture is placed upon an equal basis with industry, finance, and commerce; (5) The creation of regional governments possessed of more autonomy than the states, which will sustain the political economy fitted for each region, and which will prevent much sectional friction and sectional exploitation.

Once this foundation is securely built, the agrarian society will grow upon it spontaneously and with no further state intervention beyond that to which an agricultural population is accustomed. The old communities, the old churches, the old songs would arise from their moribund slumbers. Art, music, and literature could emerge into the sunlight from the dark cramped holes where industrial insecurity and industrial insensitiveness have often driven them. There would be a sound basis for statesmanship to take the place of demagoguery and corrupt politics. Leisure, good manners, and the good way of life might again become ours.

A Scholar-Saint

Paul Elmer More

During his life Baron von Hügel, to those who knew him intimately and could appreciate him, was perhaps the outstanding impersonation of religion in England, a man combining the most alert sensitiveness to the philosophical problems of theology with the most unquestioning zeal of Christian faith. There was about him the mystery of a splendour flaming from a hidden source, something at once attractive and unapproachable. Mr. Edwyn Bevan, a fellow member with him of the London Society for the Study of Religion, so described him: "Those who heard the Baron speak at one of these meetings will never forget it – the grey hair standing up from his forehead, the large dark eyes in a face as of fine ivory, the divine fire which seemed to fill him, the passionate sense of the reality of God, which broke forth in volcanic utterance, strange bits of slang and colloquialisms mingling with magnificent phrases, and left him, when ended, exhausted and trembling." And to another member of the same society, Claude Montefiori, he was, more simply, "the great scholar-saint".* There are signs today that his influence is broadening out; but his ever-searching philosophy needs, for quicker comprehension, to be ordered and organized, and such a task Mr. A. Hazard Dakin, Jr., has undertaken and, on the whole, admirably executed in his study of *Von Hügel and the Supernatural*, recently published.* If the following briefer essay at interpretation closes on a note of adverse criticism, I trust this will not be laid to lack of reverence for one whom, though known to me only through his writings, I accept and would extol as indeed a scholar-saint.

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* Quoted by Bernard Holland in his Introduction to the *Selected Letters*, pp. 35 and 36.

The father of our subject was an Austrian and a Baron of the Holy Roman Empire, distinguished in his day as a traveller, an antiquarian, and a diplomat. In 1852 he was Minister to the Grand Ducal Court of Tuscany, and at Florence in that year his son Friedrich was born. The mother was a Scottish lady, so that the boy was bilingual from birth. In 1860 the Baron was transferred to Brussels, where he remained for seven years. Here Friedrich got most of his education (he was never at school or university), and added French to his English, German, and Italian. In all these languages he corresponded freely, and he had besides an adequate knowledge of Latin and Greek. Later the family moved to England and settled at Torquay. The father died in 1870. Three years after that the son married Lady Mary Herbert, sister of the thirteenth Earl of Pembroke. Their home was finally in London, and there, in 1925, our Baron ended his life.

As gradually von Hügel became better known he received frequent invitations to lecture. To these calls he responded as far as health permitted, and we have seen the impression he made on the group of notable men who met together in London for the discussion of religious topics. He published also several books, of which I take *The Mystical Element of Religion* and the two volumes of *Essays and Addresses* to be the most important. He was a laborious writer, to whom language seemed rather an enemy to be overcome than a friend of the spirit; and it must be confessed that he is often laborious to read. Adjective is piled upon adjective, strange abstract substantives are coined, parenthetical clauses are tangled together; his periods occasionally fall into awkward involution as if he were thinking in another tongue and translating his thoughts literally for the printed page, and indeed he says somewhere that seven-tenths of his reading was done in German. Yet withal he was a great writer, and, if style is the man, a great stylist. At times his sentences, even whole paragraphs, have the epigrammatic perfection which comes when a thought or image has been held in the mind until, beaten free of encumbrances, it stands out in naked simplicity. Even his clumsier pages have the merit of transcription; beneath the clash of Teutonic and English idiom it is as if we heard the very voice of a great spirit in travail.

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* VON HUGEL AND THE SUPERNATURAL *by A. Hazard Dakin, Jr.* (MACMILLAN. 273 pp. $5.50).

For saint and scholar though he was, one cannot read his *Letters* (which in my estimation have a value beyond that of his writings for the public, just because they bring us closer to the man himself) without feeling that here was a soul wrestling with some interior obstacle which kept his ideas and emotions from coalescing in final harmony. There is depth of emotional experience and there is breadth of thought, but in the end not the equipoise of mind that philosophy can impart, nor the measure of peace beyond understanding that religion ought to confer. No doubt his deafness enforced a certain isolation from general society for which he was not responsible; but beyond that there breaks out now and then through the communications with his most intimate friends a cry of loneliness which is of the soul and not of circumstance. To Miss Petre, who was suffering "more or less of a nervous breakdown", he writes: "So I can sympathize, even from my own immediate feelings, but far more, of course, because of the many *years* of my life, when I was, I am sure, far worse than you can be." Loneliness and nerves, these are not the dominant note of his *Letters*, and it was the example of high heroism that drew to him the more spiritually minded of his contemporaries; but perturbation was there also, a cloud of unclarity never entirely dispersed.

Any one familiar with von Hügel's works will have been struck by the recurrence of two words, "tension" and "costingness", which seem to be the best terms he could find for the focal points where all his thinking and all his deeper emotions converge.

By tension he means something primarily very simple and quite universal – the bare fact that every man, even the least introspective, feels himself drawn in two directions, that there is a certain duality of ends inherent in his nature as a human being. However immersed he may be in the pursuit of business or pleasure, there will come to him moments of revulsion when he longs for an inner repose and self-realization not given by the distractions of daily life. With reflection and deepening experience this polarity of attraction becomes a more permanent factor of consciousness and a more sharply defined division of obligations. It has passed under the sway of religion, and shows itself in the feeling that somehow we are related to two divergent spheres, and that somehow a double demand is laid upon us to make ourselves right with this world and with what, in distinction, we call the other-world. To the Christian this final polarity of experience appears, objectively, in the contrast between Creator and creature, and, subjectively, in the alternations between attachment and detachment as these range all the way from the humblest needs of the body, through the larger interests of reason and imagination, up to the practice of religion in worship and prayer and adoration.

Now this tension of the inner life, as I have said, is in varying degrees common to all men and is the distinctive mark of humanity. The degree may be very low. It may be true of most men that they feel attachment and detachment rather as passing moods than as a settled state; they drift from moment to moment, from interest to interest; and if by reason of greater vehemence of will or passion they become strongly attached to the successes of this world, the sense of detachment is correspondingly lessened to flickering instants of doubt. But with von Hügel we cannot read even a few of his pages without recognizing that here was one to whom both worlds were powerfully and coincidentally present, whose interest in both was vividly real, and the whole set of whose will was to live in both by comprehension rather than by alternation. Hence the polarity, which ordinarily produces only a fluttering from side to side, is felt by him as a constant problem of consciousness in the answer to which lies the measure of the fullness of life. Hence too the response of the reader, the feeling that here is a true man, in comparison with whom most others, by reason of their one-sided development, seem but embryos of humanity, mere potentialities rather than actualities, which "slip from our grasp like a shadow or a dream".

His love of family, particularly of his oldest daughter, was a passion in which we see brought together the instincts of nature and the implication of soul with soul in the longing for an eternity of common worship. His friendships were wide and strong, rooted at once in human attachment and in mutuality of spiritual help. His interest in science and secular philosophy, to a less extent in art and literature, was close and genuine. At the same time one is struck by the effort to discover in all these fields a contribution to religion, where perhaps in themselves they might seem to be pulling in the contrary direction. This is especially true of his attitude towards Victorian science, as may be seen in his frequent elevation of Darwin into a model for Christian disinterestedness, and in his readiness to turn theories of materialistic determinism into a lesson of Christian humility before the vast reach of spiritual law. Intellectually he is broad almost to the point of failing to admit certain final incompatibilities; if there is weakness here, it is not of narrowness or prejudice, but in some lack of indignation. A friend of his has noted that the only things over which he was wont to be indignant were Christian Science and Mrs. Besant.

And this conscious contrast at once and drawing-together of the two ways continues on into the formalities of religion itself. Now the doubling of appeal is between the immediacy of the inner light and the mediation of sacramental grace, between the privacy of a soul with God and the commonalty of worship. Through all his life the Baron was drawn to the mystics, with their tendency to substitute personal ecstasy for the mediatorial office of the Church, and his own spirit of devotion was so intensely individualistic as to leave him never quite at ease with the authoritarian policy of Rome; yet on the other side no one could speak more eloquently of the advantages of institutionalism or submit more humbly to the great tradition. Nothing is more characteristic of the man than the accounts of the wide-sweeping independence of his conversation with a friend, during a walk into the country, and then of his rapt, childlike adoration before the Host in some barren little church as they were nearing home.

All this is not only the figure of the Baron's life, but makes the constant burden of his philosophy. Perhaps the most explicit and complete of his many attempts to define his position occurs in *The Mystical Element of Religion*, Volume II, page 127; but, as briefer and as illustrative also of his indebtedness to a certain group of Germans, I take this passage quoted by him with approval from Troeltsch:

> This multiplicity [of moral ends] can be further determined as the contrast between two poles, both imbedded within man's nature, from which proceed the two chief types of ends, the religious and the this-worldly. It is the polarity of religious and of humane morality, neither of which can be missed without moral damage, yet which, all the same, refuse to be brought to a common formula. Upon this polarity reposes the

richness of our life, and also its difficulty; but from it also there ever arises anew the ardent endeavour to find some unification.

These might be the words of the Baron himself. And from the "difficulty" involved in this polarity and from the need of "ardent endeavour", one is carried immediately from his insistence on tension to the other great term of his vocabulary, "costingness". Here again the idea is borrowed from one of the simplest and most universal phases of human experience. It needs no philosopher to teach us that every good thing in the market of this world must be purchased at a price. He who will win out in any of the affairs of life must pay for his success, whether it be in business or the professions or politics or learning or art, in the self-enlargement of marriage and friendship or the mere possession of one's self in peace. That is the law of compensation from which there is no escape, least of all in that footing between this-world and the other-world which is the way of religion. Here is the place where tension and costingness, as the Baron knew, come together at their highest point.

Now the cost of religion may show itself in either one of two exactions. It may demand the breaking of all ties to the things of this world, even to those in themselves most innocent and beautiful. This is the way of asceticism, and it is the actual, though never quite frankly acknowledged, ideal of the Roman Church. Or it may exact the sacrifice of ease for such a strenuous unremitting control of temperamental impulse towards either pole of tension as is needed for mediation and adjustment. This is the way of humanism, and it is essentially, I believe, the Anglican ideal of the *via media*, though many of that communion would deny it. Superficially the ascetic may appear to be paying more heavily for his religion than the humanist; but if one weighs the price in terms of energy of the will, I suspect that the balance is on the other side. To give up this world unreservedly for the other, to abandon attachment to all creatures for the single-minded love of God, is costly indeed; but in the end I doubt if it is as hard an act of faith as that of one who resolves to live in both worlds at once, rendering to each its proper due, and to love the creature *as creature* without allowing such an attachment to detach him from love of the Creator. Is the religion of the ascetic really purer than that of the humanist? Is it unfair to ask whether in fact the ascetic's surrender of this world, if probed to the bottom, may not be found to harbour a lurking suspicion of surrender to his own unbalanced temper? Is the renunciation of a hermit like St. Anthony or are the austerities of a frightened libertine like the Trappist de Rancé higher in spiritual grace, more profoundly Christian, closer to the perfection of a being who presumedly was placed in this world for a purpose, than the life of a Hooker or a Bishop Ken?

That is a question to which the Baron's Church has never given an answer quite free of ambiguity. But of the Baron himself we may assert that, however vehemently his heart was set on the naked values of the other-world, he saw and professed that the path to that goal was through comprehension and mediation. Whatever may have been his attraction to the great mystics of the faith and to the devotees of asceticism, his stand on sober reflection was always this side of the extreme and towards the humanistic mean of adjustment.

> The very things we, men, are to love and seek [he writes] are also the same things which we are to be detached from, and from which we are to flee. Attachment and cultivation, and detachment and renouncement, will thus each gain and keep a splendid spaciousness of occasions and materials. There will be no fanaticism, but a profound earnestness; there will be no worldliness, but an immense variety of interest and expansion towards all things in their specific kinds and degrees of goodness, truth, and beauty.

He saw clearly, perhaps the more clearly for a certain strain in his own nature, that only by such a balance can the wholesomeness of the spiritual life be kept unimpaired: "It is a difficult art to prevent religion from overstraining us and from thus leading to a very dangerous reaction against itself."

And this art of religion, to be fabricated out of the whole substance of human experience, corresponds with the epistemology, or scientific theory of knowledge, which the Baron accepted under the name of critical realism. Our perception of physical objects, he believed, is evoked by some emanation from them to us, and is thus realistic in the sense that we are in contact with the actual nature of the objective world. At the same time something subjective, some process of our own mind, enters into the act of perception, so that the reality of the object perceived can be known only by a critical analysis of the method of knowing, which can approach but never attain complete objectivity. In similar fashion our knowledge of God starts with the spiritual perception of a presence objectively real, but is conditioned also by the mechanism of our intuitive faculty. Here too clarity depends on the power of separating what is objective from what is subjective. But in this case the critical process is complicated by the fact that from its first beginning the intuition of God is bound up with the perception of physical phenomena, and that growth in religion comes through the whole range of experience, emotional, imaginative, and rational. We can never wholly abstract our sense of the reality of God from our relation to the world of physical realities.

All this is in line with the humanistic approach to the mysteries of religion. Yet the final impression left in the mind by von Hügel's works is not of pure humanism. His philosophy presents another aspect which, at the least, is not easily reconciled with critical realism, and which I can only explain as a foreign intrusion from the rationalizing metaphysics of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas and Kant, and to a lesser degree of Plotinus and Spinoza. This turn of his thought has to do with the duality of God and the world, and is primarily a matter of purely intellectual theory, but it works down almost imperceptibly, inevitably, into the tensions of actual experience. As humanist he will say: "What God is in Himself we, strictly speaking, do not know; all our true knowledge of Him is limited to what He is to us and in us." As a metaphysician he will define the essence of Godhead in terms of infinity which, however disguised by negations, does pretend to a positive knowledge beyond what He is to us and in us.

In this field of speculation von Hügel reasons from the axiom that we must conceive God either as immanent or as transcendent. Now the complete immanence of God, whether in the form of frank pantheism or of Hegelian dialectic, he rejects always, unhesitatingly, and in his later years almost fanatically. It was this chiefly that caused him to break finally with his friend Loisy, after following the French scholar's modernism to the verge, if not beyond it, of what in Rome was denounced for heresy. The reason for his antipathy he states in a letter to Father Tyrrell, who was slowly moving in the direction of Loisy, but with whom he remained in friendly intercourse to the tragic end. "If", he writes, "one were to take your clear-cut Immanentism as final and complete, the noblest half of the religious experience of tip-toe expectation, of unfulfilled aspiration, of sense of a Divine Life, of which our own but touches the outskirts, would have no place." There he was speaking from his heart, out of a conviction which no theorem of abstract reasoning could overshadow or confuse or cause to waver. And his words, to the humanist, indeed to the genuine theist, are the charter of religion.

Von Hügel never faltered in his hostility to any form of pure immanentism and in his assertion of the transcendence of God. But there are two ways of understanding transcendentalism, and here he was not so clear or so consistent. To the religious sense as involved in worship and adoration and prayer, and, I should add, to any true philosophy, God is conceived as apart from and above the world, yet still connected with the world and consequently in some manner conditioned by the world. On the other hand, to metaphysics, to religion subjected to the demands of pure reason, God becomes an abstraction totally detached from the world and absolutely unconditioned. Now in what I should regard as his normal state the Baron is strong for the first of these two conceptions; and he defines his position by declaring that God must be both transcendent and immanent. He is sensitively aware of the fact that what faith instinctively looks up to is a divine Personality working in and upon the world as the Agent of teleology, the Creator of beauty and joy, the Judge also, and that to stop there is not obscurantism but humility. Only such a view is in harmony with his constant insistence on the approach to truth through the whole round of experience, and not through "a violent clarifying of the rich obscurities of life" under the tyranny of reason. He is fully aware of the danger of crossing this humbler approach to truth with the presumptions of metaphysical finality. "The touching troubledness of spirit," he says of Plotinus, is "caused in great part, not simply by the greatness of the Reality which he is attempting to seize and express, but by the contradiction between his spiritual experiences and his system's exigencies – between the immensely rich, intensely concrete God . . . and the unpicturable Poverty and Abstractness of his system."

The Baron sees, at his clearer moments, that the error of the "system" is central to the whole metaphysical tradition carried down from Aristotle to the present day, and he can utter sharp criticism of St. Thomas and Kant. He can lay his finger on the root of the false growth of modern German Idealism in Descartes's "fundamental principle" of starting "not from the concrete fact, viz., a mind thinking *something*, . . . but from that pure abstraction – thinking, or thought, or a thinking of a thought". Nevertheless his own indoctrination in philosophy through scholastic and modern German Idealism is too strong for him; he cannot escape the net of their abstractions. "The thirst of religion is, at bottom," he avows, "a metaphysical thirst, and the intimations of religion are, ultimately, metaphysical intimations." And he knows perfectly well what is implied by this submission to metaphysics. It means, as he states categorically, that God shall be defined in terms of Aristotle's "Unmoving *energeia*", of St. Thomas's *Ipsum Esse*, and of Kant's "Idea of the Unconditioned".

A new tension is thus forced into the centre of religion by this double conception of transcendentalism, as thought rests now in a God associated with, and therefore in some sense conditioned by, the world, and turns now to a God totally abstracted from the world. Which is the God of worship, or are there in fact two Gods? Von Hügel is too honest and too clear-sighted to pass over this difficulty, and his efforts to reconcile the two horns of the dilemma are instructive, and – shall I say it? – to one of his admirers a little saddening. God Himself is absolute, but He wills to be conditioned. "When we say we believe in the Creation, . . . we profess the mysterious belief that God has somehow alienated a certain amount of His own power, and given it a relative independence of its own; that He has, as it were, set up (relative but still real) obstacles, limits, friction as it were against Himself." This of course, though the Baron apparently did not know it, is nothing but the *Zimzoum* of the Hebrew cabalists which, by underhand channels, had crept into Christian theology. It leads straight on to that dichotomy of the Divine Essence into God the Creator and a pure uncreative Godhead taught by Meister Eckhart and, somewhat illogically, repudiated by Rome. So in one place (*Essays*, II, 152) you will find him taking his stand with the Church in condemning the plain heresy of Eckhart, and then in the same volume (p. 206) you will find him practically repeating and sanctioning that heretic's plea to rise from the creeping worship of a God to contemplation of the impersonal Godhead: "The religious sense, at its deepest and in the long run, will not, must not, be restricted to the Self-limited Creative God, or (worse still) to the persuasion that the whole of the Absolute – that God in and for Himself – has been and is absorbed in God the Creator."

What has happened? Why should theology not remain content with its conception of a God related to the world and grasped in the human experience of religion? Why should it attempt to soar above such a concrete reality to a pure abstraction of reason, and, so attempting, lose itself in vacuity? The answer of the Baron, as of theologians pretty generally, is that the craving for something Absolute is a part of religious experience which demands satisfaction, just as is the "lower" idea of God the Creator, Preserver, and Saviour. There can be no peace for the human soul, no respite from the weariness of all transitory and evanescent pursuits, except through faith in some One Thing fixed and steadfast and immovable, some One Thing utterly unconcerned with the flowing tides of change. In the correspondence, published under the title of *Difficulties*, between Arnold Lunn, then an Anglican, and Ronald Knox, a Roman Catholic priest, I find a bold statement of this need. The Anglican has been arguing for a God somehow limited on the ground that not otherwise can we account for the actual world and leave room for the moral sense of man, and Father Knox cuts through his logic with this drastic assertion of the Absolute:

> The point of our difference may be expressed thus. You will not go with me to worship a God who is limited by nothing outside himself, because you do not think that he exists. And I will not go with you to worship a God who is limited by anything outside himself, because I do not care a rap whether he exists or not.

Here would seem to be a radical divergence of a sort to east suspicion upon the whole inference of theism; but I believe the antinomy has its root in a false terminology, and that some approach to reconciliation might be effected if for the "absolute", the "unconditioned", were substituted the word "ultimate".* The difference between these terms, and the consequences of using one or the other, may not be immediately apparent, but will come out by illustration from two of the primary tensions of religion: time and eternity, suffering and impassibility.

Our scholar-saint was much influenced by the Bergsonian philosophy, and in particular by the distinction between so-called clock time and duration. In the former we register a procession of seconds, moments, mechanically following one another like the ticking of a clock, each complete in itself and cut off from its predecessor and successor. That is the character of the succession of events in space, which have no present except as a moving line of division between past and future. But this clock time is quite different from the durational time of human consciousness. Here the past is not dropped automatically, but is carried on, more or less intact, by memory, while some part of the future also is grasped by anticipation. There is succession from what has been to what is not yet, but succession in the form of a moving present of which past and future are integral parts. The temporal element of consciousness thus carries us along with the procession of broken instants, yet contains also something continuous and consolidative; we are forever multiplied with the tide of things sweeping from past to future, forever one in that composite present which is the seat of the constant Self. Such is the duality of our human state; and, clearly, we measure the strength and depth of the soul just as the continuous element of consciousness usurps upon the flux. The feeble fluttering soul is he who lives most closely to clock time, from moment to moment, untaught by the past, unmindful of the future, whereas the valiant soul is he who lives more completely in durational time. Character grows just with the power to hold the past and the future in the present. To the possessor of character we turn with trust, and from this trust we borrow help and comfort for ourselves under the stress of successive events that beat upon us and are always threatening to disintegrate the solid core of our being.

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* The term "ultimate" I borrow from C. C. J. Webb's insistence, in his *Religion and Theism*, on "ultimacy" and "intimacy" as features found in all instances of religion. But I am not at all sure that Professor Webb would accept my distinction between the ultimate and the absolute.

Here the Ultimate, forever desired and never attainable by man, would be the state of a Being who lives in the succession of time, who has a past and a future, yet to whom no fragment of the past is lost and to whom no possibility of the future is veiled, whose knowledge is eternal though it move in time with a universe forever flowing and drifting and still crying out for guidance. Something of the complexity of human experience, it must be admitted, clings to the Ultimate so conceived, whereas reason is not content with anything short of absolute simplification. Hence we see theology pushing intemperately beyond the Ultimate of faith, and setting up an idol of the Absolute conceived as an eternity in which there is no succession, no past or future, but only a static present spread out in infinite monotony, with no portion in what lies before and after, with no possible reaction to a world moving in time, severed from life, alone, self-absorbed in frozen isolation, and to all human needs perfectly meaningless.

The tension of suffering and impassibility is of the same nature and springs from the same actuality of human experience. No man has escaped suffering; nevertheless, while suffering, we are all of us, in varying degrees, aware of something within us that stands apart from the passions of life. It is not that we are so divided as to be two persons, one of which suffers while the other is impassive, but that there is a duality reaching in to the centre of consciousness. It is *I* that feel the pathos, it is *I* that know myself capable of feeling without loss of personal integrity. Growth in character, the acquisition of power, again as in the tension of time, depends on this mastery of suffering, which is a kind of self-mastery. The weak man is a victim of his passions and a slave of circumstance. The strong man does not suffer less and is not untouched by the depredations of fate — *mentem mortalia tangunt* — indeed his capacity for feeling may grow keener as he rises in manhood; but withal he is lord of his own soul. Such is the man we trust; that is the pattern of heroism which has inspired the eulogy of poets and sages:

> *For thou hast been*
> *As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing.*

But this ideal, however we look for it in humanity, however we need it for comfort in our human relations, we nowhere find, neither in ourselves nor in another. And I believe the sheer horror of a universe shaken in every corner of its sentient being by the passions of mutability would drive faith to create for itself, if it could not discover as a reality, an Ultimate analogous to the duality of our experience but without the impotence of human nature. So we have the God of religion: a Being anthropomorphic indeed, as capable of combining *pathos* with impassibility, yet utterly transcendent in the sense that, while responsive to the suffering of a passion-tossed world, His will and purpose are the same from everlasting to everlasting, unalterable amidst all alteration, compassionate yet needing no compassion. We are touching here on a mystery that baffles comprehension; but has any mind ever comprehended the lesser paradox of human personality?

Such is the God whose living reality von Hügel felt, and could make others feel, as did scarcely any one else in his day. Yet again, drawn on by the specious demands of reason, he will solve the ultimate paradox of suffering and impassibility by dropping one of the terms and setting up the other as a pure abstraction. The Infinite shall be removed from the finite as an impassive Absolute: "Religion itself requires the Transcendence of God in a form and a degree which exclude Suffering in Him." Now in this our scholar was undoubtedly following the orthodox view of his Church, and he himself appeals to the declaration of the Council of Aquileia: *Credo in Deum impassibilem.* But I believe it may be said with equal certainty that such a definition arose from an intrusion of the spurious simplification of metaphysics into the genuine simplicity of the faith. And it introduces insoluble difficulties into the creed. Its apparent escape from anthropomorphism means in truth a denial of personality; though the Baron saw the peril to theism in any effort to "get rid of the conception of Personality in the Idea of God", as "a *mere* anthropomorphism, a *pure* myth". It digs an unbridgeable gulf between Creator and creature. It leads inevitably to such a statement as that of Aquinas, which the Baron quotes only to repudiate: "God enjoys not anything beside Himself, but enjoys Himself alone." And from that it is only a step to the Absolute of Stoic apathy, as enounced by Epictetus in what is perhaps the most hideous ideal ever avowed by philosophy: "It is better that thy son should go to ruin (*kakon einai*) than that thou shouldst be unhappy."

Von Hügel perceives the chasm of infidelity yawning at the end of the metaphysical path. As a Christian he cannot forget that the God of love must care for His creatures and, loving, must sympathize with their suffering; as a pupil of pagan philosophy he will try to avoid the implications of such an admission by making a distinction between sympathy and compassion. Which, if it have any sense, means that we accede in Greek what we retract in Latin. "We must", he declares, "beware not to press this [the concession of sympathy] further, so as to mean suffering in God [that is compassion]; for suffering is an evil, and there can be no evil in God [note the ambiguity, as if we should say it is evil for a father to have compassion on his child]."

But it is when he undertakes to reconcile the dogma of the Incarnation with the Absolute of impassibility that the trouble mounts up to anguish. "This poor little shelter of reeds, with the Absolute ever burning down upon it," he cries, "this poor little paper boat, on the sea of the Infinite — God took pity upon them, quite apart from sin and the Fall — God wanted to give their relative independence a quite absolute worth. He took as it were sides with His own handiwork against Himself and gave us the rampart of His tender strong humanity, against the crushing opposition of the pure time- and space-less Eternal and Absolute of Himself." That, evidently, is only another phase of the cabalistic and pseudo-mystic division of the Divine into a God and the Godhead. It is hard enough to reconcile with the text of orthodoxy: "God so loved the world, etc."; for what mockery of fatherhood is this, if the gift was without a pang? And that is but the beginning of the difficulty. What is to be said of the Son who was given so dispassionately by the Father? Surely there was a passion of sacrifice somehow involved in the Incarnation, a passion profound, unfathomable; yet how as God could the Incarnate suffer? To escape that dilemma the Baron invokes the dogma of the two natures. Christ is God and man: in his divine nature he will suffer nothing – nothing at Gethsemane, nothing on Calvary; while his human nature shall be left to undergo the agony alone. That, I protest, is a doctrine psychologically impossible and ethically abhorrent. It is impossible because it so separates a person's "nature" from himself that the nature can go on suffering while the person remains totally unconcerned; it is abhorrent because in effect it turns the whole drama of the Incarnation into something very like a hypocritical farce. It is as if the Son of God pretended to become man and appeared to be like man, sin only excepted, while in reality he – he himself, the person – paid not a farthing of the exacted price. If that be orthodoxy, it is perilously close to the purport of the first formidable heresy of the Church, the "docetism" against which the Apostles themselves had to contend. According to this doctrine the Logos did not really take on the nature of humanity, but only "seemed" to do so; Christ the Word condescended to dwell for a while in *a* man Jesus, and then, when the trial came, left the man to endure the penalty of the deception.*

* Von Hügel justifies his use of the two-nature dogma by appealing to the Council of Chalcedon. As a matter of fact the content of the actual Definition, in which the Council there assembled gave precision to the Nicean profession of faith, and which ever since has been the foundation rock of Eastern and Western orthodoxy, gives no warrant for hypostatizing one of the natures, so to speak, apart from the personality of the Incarnate. If, elsewhere in their proceedings, the Greek Fathers ad-

It may seem that such a distinction as I have drawn between the Ultimate and the Absolute resembles the proverbial splitting of a hair; but it is not so. The difference reaches down to the very heart of the religious life. In the first place to stop with the Ultimate does not mean that we are presuming to draw an artificial line about the power of Perfect Goodness, or to define the essential nature of Deity in terms of finite understanding; rather it is an honest recognition of the limits of the human mind. Our knowledge of God ends with what ultimately He is to us and for us; what, if anything, stretches beyond that the humanist leaves reverently in the vast unknown. Pride of intellect belongs rather to those who think that the Unknowable can be defined in terms of pure reason. With the bare metaphysician such a presumption may exhaust itself in the innocent abstractions of a Spinoza or a Kant. For the theist in earnest with his faith it can have only one logical result: either "complete" mysticism or stark asceticism. In one way or another as soon as the object of worship is turned into an Absolute Reality, unconditioned, timeless, impassible, severed from the sphere of Appearances by the gulf of an infinite dualism, just so soon the aim of religion, if serious, will take the form of reaching after God by fleeing the conditions of humanity.

It would not be uncharitable to say of most Christians that they live in a middle ground, not of media-

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mitted the impassibility of God in such wise as to attribute the suffering of the Son to his human nature as distinct from his divine nature and his personality, they were led into this error of open docetism and virtual Nestorianism by submission to external authority.

tion (for indeed there can be no mediation between the ideal of mediation itself and absolutism), but of unheroic indecision. The peculiarity of the Baron is that he was drawn with intense conviction towards both types of religion, the humane and the metaphysical, having a clear sense of what each of them in itself implies, yet never seeing their final incompatibility. The cost of that intellectual confusion he paid in a wearing strain of the spirit quite different in kind from the normal tensions of life which he understood so well and described so eloquently. Scholar-saint he undoubtedly was; he might have been also the supreme exemplar for our age of religious humanism.

An Experiment in Classicism

André Obey and La Compagnie des Quinze

LEWIS MORTON

TO THOSE who witnessed the *Lucrece* of two seasons ago, the announcement that Broadway is to see another Obey production will doubtless afford only a reminiscent shudder. But as one who saw the original *Viol de Lucrèce* and the forthcoming *Noé* when they were first produced in Paris, I cannot help being doubly pleased at the prospect. In the first place it means that Obey is to have another, and, it is to be hoped, a less prejudicial hearing (for it is commonly admitted that the failure of the New York play was due chiefly to the artistic bungling of its producers). But more important than that, it signalizes the vitality of the theatrical experiment which Obey represents, namely, Jacques Copeau's Compagnie des Quinze.

And that is an experiment which no one genuinely interested in the American theatre can afford to ignore. Again there are two reasons. On the technical side, "Les Quinze" have achieved a sensitivity and a finesse which have been warmly acclaimed both on the Continent and in England, and which might well merit the attention of a country where, in the words of Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, "acting, as a genuine interpretative art, hardly exists". But on the side of dramatic principle the Copeau experiment is even more significant. To call it an experiment in classicism will not, I realize, carry much cogency in a time when the most widely publicized theatrical movements are born either of a bludgeoning communism or of an artily symbolic and mood-mongering expressionism. Nor do I wish to imply that it is a self-conscious attempt to revive the apparatus of Athenian tragedy and to force it down the throat of the contemporary theatre. On the contrary, it is, before anything else, an honest attempt to solve the practical problems of the theatrical hour, but the remarkable fact is that it has, in solving them, returned almost unconsciously to the spirit of the Greek theatre. I propose, therefore, to consider the principles and programme of La Compagnie des Quinze with a view to determining what may reasonably be hoped from the idea which it represents.

That it does represent an idea is what distinguishes it at once from the rather casual association of playwright, actor, and designer which constitutes the usual group theatre. But it is distinct from even the unusual group theatre – it is unique, in fact, among its kind – in that it represents an idea which has been tested by the experience and experiment of years. Les Quinze did not spring full-formed from the head of M. Copeau on the eve of their Paris opening. They constitute instead the mature growth, the final form of an idea conceived before the War and gradually tooled and fashioned until it had attained at least a moderate perfection. It may not be too much to say that Les Quinze are, in that sense, a work of art modelled in human clay.

As has been indicated, M. Copeau's idea was not a deliberate attempt to body forth a pencil-and-paper theory. He was making a purely technical answer to a purely technical problem. Realizing, like Gordon

Craig in England and Vachtangov in Russia, that the theatre of the day was already moribund, that the cult of the star, the frenetic pursuit of the realistic illusion, the widening breach between playwright and production were taking a paralyzing toll, he set out to evolve a remedy, and to that end formed the Compagnie du Vieux-Colombier. What he was aiming at was, as he says,

> . . . l'harmonie de la représentation, une vie scénique qui ne fût pas inférieure à la vie poétique du drame, et qui lui fût fidèle . . . Formation du comédien au métier de l'esprit, formation du poète au métier de la scène, consentement de l'oeuvre littéraire au style de l'architecture théâtrale, unité foncière de la représentation.

But such an ideal cannot, obviously, be achieved overnight. Of the vicissitudes which attended the first ten years of his venture, Copeau tells the eloquent story in his *Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier*. Suffice it here to note that the more he experimented, the more he came to realize that the only real hope for his plan lay in the younger generation. The result was the formation, in 1921, of the "école des jeunes", the germ of La Compagnie des Quinze. Composed of boys and girls in their early teens, it sought to mould them in accordance with a conception of the true actor which could hardly be surpassed: "Un homme comme les autres, plus homme que les autres, avec un corps plus souple, plus docile à la volonté, un coeur plus noble, un esprit plus lucide, une culture plus étendue." Its programme of action Copeau describes as follows:

> . . . il s'agissait de former *un choeur*, au sense antique. Une préoccupation technique d'ordre fondamental nous

ramenait d'emblée à la source de l'inspiration: le choeur est la cellule-mère de toute poésie dramatique. C'est bien de poésie que nous étions altérés.

The analogy with the Greek chorus here is important, being as it is a clue to the spirit that informs the whole experiment. The Greek ideal of inner, organic unity working outward into natural and complete expression seems everywhere to characterize the activities of the troupe, and is one of the important bases for the classic temper which pervades the plays themselves. It has a curious analogue in the fact that the company's first public appearances, made during its five-year sojourn in Burgundy, were, like the beginnings of Greek tragedy itself, impromptu celebrations of the *fêtes du vin nouveau.*

This sojourn *en province* was the next step in the development of the company. For in 1924 Copeau gave up the Compagnie du Vieux-Colombier and, settling in a small provincial town, began the intensive training of his troupe, seeking now to foster, without destroying the morale of the whole, whatever special talents various of his "gosses" had begun to display. But troubles soon arose: financial support was withdrawn; certain of the company lost heart and left; those who remained had to give public performances as a means of livelihood. Nevertheless they managed to endure, and the survived hardships served only to weld them more closely together. Meanwhile their powers were developing fast. From farces and impromptu fantasies they went on to more ambitious undertakings; from open-air performances in the provincial villages they graduated to rehearsed productions in the towns and cities until, as their reputation grew, they were able to make several extended tours, not only in France, but also in Switzerland, Belgium, even England. And in the fall of 1930, their training complete, they returned to Paris and began rehearsals at the Vieux-Colombier, where on January 7, 1931, they made their first appearance before a Parisian public with the *Noé* of André Obey.

Here, then, was a new kind of theatrical company – a group of eager, talented young people who, in pursuit of nothing more tangible than an artistic ideal, had cut themselves off voluntarily from the delights of Paris to devote the best years of their youth to arduous and exacting labours, merging all their individuality in the spirit of the whole. Here was, in other words, the final flowering of M. Copeau's idea, an instrument of dramatic art which was itself a unit and which was dedicated to the *unité foncière* of the dramatic product.

In this connection, the very name of the troupe takes on new meaning. Like the Earl of Leicester's Men, this was a *company*, or, in the Shakespearean sense, a *fellowship*, where the playwright, important and even indispensable though he might be, was still "our fellowe Shakespeare", with all that that implies. And it implies – more, perhaps, than anything else – a playwright's paradise. No longer must he work at cross-purposes with producer, designer, and star-actor. Instead he becomes part of an integrated group, where everyone is striving toward the common end, where all are, in reality, creators. He knows at first hand the material in which he has to work; it is for him a medium which, like the sculptor's clay, he can shape and model to whatever form he may desire. He enjoys, that is, a situation analogous to that in which some of the greatest drama has been produced. Not only Shakespeare and Molière, but, in their capacities as choregi, Aeschylus and Sophocles wrote their plays under precisely these conditions. And surely if we are to restore the drama to new life, if we are to see it wax and grow great among us, we can do worse than duplicate the conditions under which it knew its former greatness.

II

In turning now from a description of the tree to a consideration of its fruit, I propose to discuss the challenge which Les Quinze threw down to existing tendencies in the theatre. I shall limit myself to the two plays which constituted their first season's repertory, *Noé* and *Le Viol de Lucrèce*, since they are at once the only ones whose original production I witnessed, and the only ones which have so far crossed the Atlantic.

The existing tendencies of the theatre in 1931 were, of course, unequivocally realistic, and it is for their direct indictment of realism in the drama that Les Quinze must first be praised. Nor, as it happens, did they cry altogether in the wilderness, for the keynote of their challenge has been sounded again and again during the intervening years. Mr. Walter Pritchard Eaton, in signalizing its final penetration to the American stage, has called it the "Revolt from Realism", and his arraignment of the realistic approach is almost identical with the implicit criticism of it which the work of Les Quinze four years ago embodied. The mere fact that Les Quinze were thus the heralds of a new dramatic dawn is no small tribute to Copeau's artistic perspicacity, but more important is the fact that they were able to envisage the problem in its completeness and to formulate a solution far more in harmony with the basic principles of sound dramatic theory than any that has since appeared.

They perceived in the first place that the attempts to achieve an elaborately realistic illusion constituted the most malignant symptom of the disease. They realized, as even so confirmed a modernist as Mr. George Jean Nathan has since been converted to believe, that this tendency in the theatre was merely a hopeless effort to compete with the cinema, and that even the most up-to-date theatre could never achieve the goal one-half so convincingly as it was done five times a day in the ordinary ten-cent movie palace.

In consequence, they deliberately eschewed whatever smacked of machinery, ornament, display. Their stage rivalled Shakespeare's own in simplicity. With its concrete floor, its bare walls, and the plain wooden pillars of its central colonnade, it made no pretense at reality. The columns themselves, indeed, were almost its only furniture, and their very presence was an open repudiation of the realistic approach. Now the trees of a forest, now the pillars of Collatin's salon, now the walls of Lucrèce's bedroom, and now the blank, empty space of the open sea, they provided free play for the fantasies of the company's chosen patron, Dame Convention. In the words of Henri Ghéon, Les Quinze solved the problem of how much to represent on the stage,

> en ne montrant rien de tout. En tournant le dos au réel, ou plus exactement au réalisme. En rétablissant sur votre

> théâtre le règne absolu et illimité de Dame Convention, que fut aimée d'Eschyle et de Sophocle, d'Aristophane et de Shakespeare, de Plaute, de Molière. . . .

They resolved, in other words, to strip the theatre of those gaudy embellishments which any real conception of dramatic art must always consider as wrongheaded as an attempt to clothe the nakedness of a Greek statue.

This, then, was their solution of the external problem, the problem of staging. But their greatest claim to serious attention lies precisely in their recognition of the fact that it *was* external, that staging itself is, after all, a secondary matter, subordinate to the real end of the drama. And in their conception of the drama's real end lies their central contribution to the theatre, the germ of the classic tendencies which I conceive them to embody. Again the crux of the matter is the problem of reality. And again the intervening years have brought the dramatic world around to the belief that the slice-of-life theory is definitely passé. But again the contemporary substitutes are shallow and unconvincing. Where communism on the one hand proposes a reality of strikes and statistics, expressionism holds to a mystical reality of mood. Neither of them has perceived the vital point of the problem, which hinges, as it always has, upon the Aristotelian conception. We do not want, as Mr. Allardyce Nicoll says,

> merely an excerpt from reality; it is the imaginative transformation of reality, as it is seen through the eyes of the poet, that we desire. . . . The great art of the theatre is to suggest, not to tell openly; to dilate the mind by symbols, not by actual things. . . .

And this is nothing more—nor, indeed, less—than Aristotle in modern guise. Mr. Nicoll's "imaginative transformation of reality" is precisely "true imitation"; his "dilation of the mind", "universality". The salvation of the modern stage, then, demands a return to classical principles of tragedy. But that is exactly what La Compagnie des Quinze, as it expresses itself in these two plays of M. Obey, has gone no negligible distance to achieve.

The most immediately striking aspect of these two plays, considered together, is the nature of their subject-matter. Neither is contemporary. Neither is even recent. The first goes back to one of the earliest episodes of the Old Testament; the second, to one of the earliest episodes of Roman history. Both are interpretations of traditions and cultures quite foreign to those of the present day; and both, finally, are concerned with events in themselves great and significant: the Deluge on the one hand, and the establishment of the Roman Republic on the other. This series of observations may seem too patent to demand comment, but it reveals one of the tendencies in which Mr. Nicoll rests the hope of the drama, namely, that of the historical play. It is his contention that many contemporary playwrights realize all too poignantly the prostitution which modern audiences demand of them. They have, he thinks, a vision of the true reality and the will to body it forth, but they are hampered by the tastes of their public. They cannot put noble, inspiring speeches into the mouths of present-day bourgeois and bourgeoises because that would defy too openly our feeling for the psychologically probable. So they have hit upon the expedient of historical subjects as a means to their universality. Having tied over the eyes of their audiences the blindfold of history, they can lead them back to the realm of human dignity and grandeur which has long since been deserted by their kind. And this, essentially, is what Obey is doing.

Another consideration that applies to both plays is Obey's use of an old device in a new guise as a means of attaining universality. It is a modern version of the Greek chorus. In *Noé* that chorus is made to consist at times of all the characters except Noah himself, and at others – *mirabile dictu* – of the animals in the Ark. In *Lucrèce* it takes the much more conventionalized form of the Récitants. This is not the place to discuss the theory of the chorus in tragedy or the problem of whether or not it is today an anachronistic technique. The essential consideration here is whether or not the chorus serves, in a manner not otherwise attainable, to dilate, to generalize, to universalize the action. This, Obey's choruses do. The Récitants of *Le Viol de Lucrèce* need no exegesis; their rôle is patent. But the less conventional chorus of *Noé* is also less comprehensible. Its function is thus described by M. Ghéon:

> Réduite à son essence, on pourrait dire que la pièce, analogue en ceci à telle tragédie Eschylienne, ne comporte qu'un personnage et un choeur. Un personnage plus grand que nature qui le plus souvent monologue; autour de lui un choeur qui se diversifie, se défait, se refait, passe de l'unisson à la polyphonie, de la conversation au chant, mais ne couvre jamais le protagoniste. . . .

The importance of such a function in such a play needs scant elaboration. For the impact of the play as Obey works it out rests entirely on the relationship between Noah and the Lord. As for the other characters, necessary though they are to provide the tragic conflict, in the play's really great moments they fall into the background and resume their typical, conventionalized rôles, while Noah faces God alone. In one of the most exalted of these moments the human characters withdraw and the animals take their place. It is in a sense the climax of the play. The rain has stopped and the Ark is becalmed. Noah has already put down one mutiny in his family and has barely been able to quell a second. The children are quarreling among themselves. Led by Ham they are one by one losing faith in their leader and in God. Noah himself has felt in place of the reassuring Presence that has so far been his stay, an aching void. "Le bon Dieu n'est plus avec nous!" Here it is that the animals fulfill their choral function, human nature having proved unworthy. Coming up to the deck of the Ark, they signalize by growls and gestures their trust in Noah's leadership. They encourage him to make, himself, the great, the necessary act of faith which, though it taxes his very moral fibre, he in the end succeeds in making. And so he is saved.

In order to lessen the apparent incongruity of this animal chorus and to vindicate myself from the absurdity of finding a classic spirit in a device as unclassical as could well be imagined, I ought to say a word about the "character" of the animals. Again I follow M. Ghéon, who has pointed out that they are conventionalized to precisely the perfect point. A middle ground has been struck between complete realism on the one hand and complete anthropomorphism on the other. Their appearance is obviously stylized, but their actions are those of highly domesticated beasts. In the words of M. Ghéon they are "nés, semble-t-il, de la collaboration intime du bon La Fontaine et de Saint François". Thus their attitude is not to be interpreted as blind, unreasoning, infrahuman instinct, but rather as a preternatural sensitivity to values which leave the human chorus indifferent and unmoved.

III

I fear that the preceding paragraphs have anticipated much that I had to say about *Noé*, and to avoid the risk of repetition I shall attempt only to trace Obey's interpretation of Noah himself. For the play is, in one sense – and I think the real sense – nothing more than the story of his spiritual development. In the opening scene, he is simply a *vieux bonhomme de paysan* moved by a divine command which he only partially understands, to perform a task whose real import he has not the imagination to envisage. As the curtain rises he is putting the finishing touches on the Ark, humming contentedly, tapping occasionally with his hammer, standing back to appraise his work with obvious self-satisfaction. No thought of the dangers and extremities that might come has entered his mind. "Quand le bâtiment va, tout va!" he sings, and therein is expressed his whole outlook. Only once is there a flash that shows his dawning comprehension. He has ordered the animals on board, but the bear, who leads them, has stopped en route and is sniffing the ground. Noah puts on his spectacles and examines the ground.

"Une fourmi! Ha! Ha! L'ours qui a peur d'une fourmi!"

Then he stops suddenly and strikes his forehead.

"Imbécile que je suis! Ce n'est pas une fourmi, c'est la Fourmi! Elle est arrivée avant tous les autres et je ne l'ai pas vue! . . . Mon Dieu! que de merveilles au seuil de cette vie nouvelle! Il y faudra grand coeur, main legère et bon oeil!

"Je crois que j'ai le coeur qu'il vous faut, mais ma vue basse! ma main tremblante! mon pied lourd!

"Enfin, si vous m'avez choisi, c'est peut-être que j'étais, comme elle [une caresse à la vache], la moins méchante bête du troupeau."

And that precisely is the impression he gives throughout the first act. He is not a prophet inspired or a saint uplifted by a vision – merely "la moins méchante bête du troupeau", humble, commonplace, and perhaps a trifle stupid – but sincere.

That impression, too, is uppermost throughout Act II and motivates his solution of the first crisis. The rain has ceased; the sun is shining. One by one all the characters except Ham mount to the deck and revel in the beauty of sea, sky, and sun-warmed air. To celebrate, Noah leads them in a quick, exulting sort of Indian dance. But before they finish Ham bursts up through the hatchway and takes Noah to task for his childishness. And although Noah has an answer ready, Ham continues and manages to sow the first seed of distrust:

"Ah! père, père, père! Il m'arrive de me demander si vous ne prenez pas pour des ordres tombés d'en haut les petites voix qui montent de vous-même."

Noah is stunned at the very suggestion, and Ham presses his advantage, asking scornfully, "Quel jour sommes-nous?" At first everyone is sure, but of course every one suggests a different day. There is momentary consternation, as the parrot takes up the question in a raucous sneer. But Noah meets the situation in the same naïve spirit that has stamped him so far. Giving everyone the name of a day, he settles the problem by the simple process of "colin-maillard". Of course it turns out to be Sunday.

In Act III comes the real change. The Ark has been long becalmed. Things on board have begun to jangle. Ham, Shem, and Noema are in open rebellion, fishing over the side of the Ark against Noah's express command. Noah comes up and catches them and there follows another scene between him and Ham in which for the first time he loses his temper. Prevailing by the very force of his anger, he orders the human beings below and the animals to the deck. There follows the scene I have already sketched, the climax of the play. Noah has aged obviously since the second act. No longer calmly, blindly faithful, he begins to show the strain of living "au milieu de sept points d'interrogation". Still determined to believe, however, he tries in vain to comprehend:

> "Non, non, allons, il reviendra. . . . C'est comme s'il était en vacances. Son petit guichet est fermé pour trois semaines, un mois peut-être. . . . Eh bien! nous attendrons qu'il se rouvre. Hein?"

He has learned his lesson. The God who has been leading him almost literally by the hand, prescribing even the dimensions of the Ark, and whom he has been treating very much *en camarade*, has now veiled his face. Noah must stand alone, guided only by the faith that is within him.

"Nous allons lui dresser, sur la plaine des eaux, un grand arbre de patience qui attirera son regard comme le chêne attire la foudre. . . ."

His faith triumphant, he lies down among the animals to sleep, and, as the curtain is lowered, the wind begins to blow; the calm is at an end.

But Noah's troubles are not at an end. The waters instead of lowering are whipped higher. The children are afraid of shipwreck. Ignoring the sneers of Ham, Noah rallies them. He persuades them that the waters are really lower and is even willing to make the supreme test. Accordingly, the raven is brought out and launched into the air. But when it appears again falling swiftly, tossed and tumbled by the wind until it drops into Noah's hands, Ham is openly scornful. Noah, as a last resort, sends forth the dove. But in the anxious moments that follow, Ham succeeds in convincing everyone except Noah's wife that Noah has secreted it on his person. Distraught, Noah pretends not to understand. Even when "La Maman" receives the dove in the hands she has lifted in prayer, Ham remains unreconciled. He accuses Noah of having passed it to her when no one was looking. But as Noah warms the dove in his hands, he notices in its beak the *rameau d'olivier* and the day is saved.

Act V is short and poignant. The Ark has come to rest on Mount Ararat. The children spring eagerly off. The boys begin to fight over a square foot of earth on the summit of the mountain, but as the girls point out the vast reaches of land they take each his wife and depart in three directions, leaving Noah alone. And his loneliness increases as the act proceeds. Turning to the bear, his special friend among the animals, he is received in an embrace that soon becomes a death-hug, and it is only with difficulty that he is able to free himself and to drive the beast, become again pure brute, off into the wilderness. Meanwhile Mother Noah, her mind cracked under the strain, sobs herself to sleep. Noah looks about him bewildered. His desolation is complete. But having learned his lesson, he does not despair. Instead he lifts his face to the sky and in his rude, colloquial fashion prays to God.

> "Tu m'ôtes d'un jardin et tu me colles sur un roc, tout seul, avec les trente-six façons de crever. Hahaaa! Ça va, ça va, ne t'en fais pas. J'vas tâcher moyen d'en sortir. . . .
>
> "Seulement, je te demande d'être un peu là, de temps en temps avec moi . . . Ta voix de temps en temps. Rien que ton souffle, même. Ou même seulement ta lumière. . . . Et l'impression que tu es content . . . Il faut être content, pas vrai? Moi, je suis content. [Il crie.] Je suis content!

With his hatchet he starts to tear the Ark to pieces, and as a rainbow glows across the sky he begins again to sing the song of the opening scene: "Quand le bâtiment va, tout va!"

And this, I maintain, is tragedy. It is, in spirit, classic tragedy. A man essentially good, but with perhaps a ἁμαρτία in the shape of a too presumptive confidence in God, has suffered deep and blighting anguish – not physical, to be sure, but none the less poignant for that – and has won through it to a new and truer faith in God and in himself. And in the process he has inspired in the audience, by reason of the simple grandeur of his nature, a similar faith not only in man's own nobility, but in the essential wisdom and justice of the moral order.

(*To be concluded*)

The Stieglitz Spoof

John Gould Fletcher

The student of American psychology – for nations, no less than individuals, have their own psychologies – is driven, sooner or later, to the desolating conclusion that the American people, unlike any other in the world, like to be insulted by their own self-appointed leaders of thought and carriers of culture. Beginning with the forties of the last century, when Charles Dickens and Mrs. Trollope descended on our shores, to depart with a shower of insults at what they took to be our narrowness, our crudity, and our insularity, there has scarcely passed a single year in our history that some European lecturer or other has not come to tell us how inferior we are in all the finer arts and graces of living. The fact that we enjoy this sort of thing has been revealed by the quantities of solid American cash said lecturers have taken away from our shores. The technique, in fact, of telling the Americans that they are all simply fools and that only Europe can teach them anything has now grown so enormously popular that many Americans – of the highly uprooted order – have taken to copying it themselves. Among these a notable example is in New York, where most of this type, in fact, flourish; his name is Alfred Stieglitz.*

Alfred Stieglitz was born on the first of January,

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* AMERICA AND ALFRED STIEGLITZ: A Collective Portrait *edited by Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, Dorothy Norman, Paul Rosenfeld, and Harold Rugg* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 339 pp. $3.50).

1864 – a date which might be taken as the beginning of the end of the older American culture, rooted in New England and the Seaboard South, and the substitution therefor of the technological, rootless, swarming and pullulating, engineered, machine-made "progress" that has gone on ever since without let or limit. The date 1864 is indeed significant in Stieglitz's case; still more significant is the fact that his birth took place within the orbit of New York. Stieglitz has all his life been a typical New Yorker; in regard to the rest of America his sole equipment is that of an invincible ignorance. He knows not what the rest of this country looks like, tastes like, smells like, or feels like. But he undoubtedly knows Paris pretty well, being convinced, as another New Yorker once remarked to the writer of this essay, that "Paris is the only place to go in Europe". And he undoubtedly also knows something of Prussianized Germany, for his parents sent him there to study engineering at seventeen. It was, indeed, a time when to become an engineer was to be truly a great man.

But Stieglitz, if I read his record correctly, proved recalcitrant to his parents' wishes. He dropped engineering and took up photography. This may prove that there remained in him – despite the enormous appeals that were held forth at the time by the prospects of following some strictly business career – some strain of Jewish exclusiveness or the peculiarly intense and brittle aestheticism that is also not infrequent among cultivated Jews. Anyhow once having taken up photography, he threw himself into it with the complete obstinacy of his fanaticism. From 1886 to 1902, there can be little doubt that he was one of the most active and experimental amateur photographers in the world. Whatever one may think of his pretensions to being more than this, it would be ungracious to refuse him this much of a title. His contributions to photography, in fact, so much outweigh his achievements as art-defender, critic, Manhattan freak, publicist, talker, or tedious bore, that I would rather discuss his work entirely from the photographic point of view – were it not that this book about him has been written by twenty-five different people to prove him to be also philosopher, guide, teacher, discoverer of genius, inspirer of the machine-age, prophet, and Messiah.

Whether photography is or is not an art, and if so, what its relation is to the other visual arts, is a question I must reserve till the last section of this essay. I only wish to say here that had Stieglitz simply remained a photographer, and nothing else, as did Clarence White, Alvin Coburn, and others who also became prominent as photographers around about 1900, his name would have been as little known as theirs. But he was not content with this. Some demon of ambition or vanity prompted him to throw overboard the accepted commercial standards of the photographic societies and journals from whom he had accepted honours and medals, and to effect, in 1902, a secession from the established ranks, as well as to open, in 1905, at 291 Fifth Avenue, a gallery for displaying the photographs of those whose work, he believed, stood above commercial standards, alongside of other works by painters and advanced artists from America and France. For this cause, he drew upon his knowledge, no doubt considerable, of what was being talked about in Paris art circles, and led the way (after a group of exhibitions by photographers) by showing drawings of Auguste Rodin in 1907 – choosing with unerring instinct the name that was then the sensation of the hour in Paris, albeit it represented an ideal of sculpture which not one single honest sculptor now left in the Western World has not come to reject with contempt.

From the moment that he embarked on the sea of art-connoisseurship and art-dealing by opening his gallery, his rise became sensational. It may be noted that this was the period when the impressionist aestheticism of the nineties – supported as it was by the cosmopolitan millionaire class – began to give way before the mingled drive towards realism and abstractionism that pervades the present day. The millionaires of that time no longer relied on their untutored taste – which mostly ran in the direction of Salon pictures – in order to establish their collections. It was the day of the experts – of the Berensons, Fenollosas, the Roger Frys. Anyone who wished to become an art connoisseur, and to acquire a collection, had first to hire an expert. It is not to be wondered at that Stieglitz followed the current, and threw himself into the business of setting up as an art expert. He was a moneyed man; he possessed to the full the Jewish persuasiveness, and the Manhattan contempt for all that had emerged from the hinterland; he knew what new things were coming out of Paris, and how the Americans could be made to go into ecstasies over them, simply because of their newness. He was even ready to forget the inconvenient fact that it was solely as a photographer that he had any right to think himself in contact with the main stream of art; he could assimilate enough studio jargon, he was already equipped with enough salesmanship, to be able to pose as a great art-expert pure and simple. Which he accordingly did.

From the opening of "291" in 1905 to the outbreak of the War in 1917 which led to its closing, Stieglitz became an imposing figure among the New York intelligentsia, waiting to be imposed upon, and a force to be reckoned with among those who were seeking for some means to make America – sold to the machine and to pre-digested academic standards – conscious of its possibilities as a new art-producing country. The time was propitious for the emergence of such a figure. A number of American artists – Eakins, Homer, Ryder, La Farge – had plowed their lonely acres, had honestly striven to express something in the American soul and its environment, and had gone their way without reward. Others, like Whistler and Sargent, had chosen instead the smart easy success of being brilliant and worldly – a success that has left its trail upon their names and reputations. Meanwhile, in Paris, things were changing. The course of Impressionism – incidentally, Stieglitz himself had helped to show how easy it was of imitation, by many of his early photographs – was running dry. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and now Matisse were soon to arise and to proclaim its end. A new primitivism and a new abstractionism – both deriving possibly from the discovery of Negro Art in Africa – were preparing, in its wake, to sweep over the world. Stieglitz had merely to show selected examples of this new art – in the case of selection, he relied, I suspect, on the sensation-hunting energies of his friend, Miss Gertrude Stein –

in order to give most Americans the impression that he knew a good deal.

But even this was not enough. He soon surrounded himself with a group of American painters who became the willing and eager *coryphaei* of the Stieglitz "idea". This idea was very simple. It will be clear to anyone who exercises his eyes (exercise here will be necessary, for the reproductions are unnecessarily small) on the reproductions printed at the end of the volume under discussion. What Stieglitz set out to persuade various American artists into doing was to cultivate agreeable patterns of paint that did not mean anything in particular, and that partook, in every case, of a fragmentary reality – the reality, shall we say, of a single blossom or petal as opposed to the reality of a bush set full of flowers: or the reality of a sea-shell as opposed to the reality of the ocean. In short, he opposed to the continental abstractionism of Picasso, Braque, and Duchamp, which was based upon a scientific analysis of structural form, a new type of American abstractionism, that of Marin, Hartley, O'Keeffe, Demuth, Dove, which was based upon the deliberate omission of everything that was significant, and the magnifying of some unimportant fragmentary detail till it covered the whole space of the canvas. The artists in his following began to look at life and nature as through a microscope, in order to find out what they could of compositional structure from the efforts of nature in that direction, shown by the veinings of leaves and the grainings of woods.

In all this, Stieglitz probably wrecked and thwarted certain talents, which without his misdirection might have found themselves engaged in more significant ways. Painting, like every other art that mankind has developed, is an art of generalization, of synthesis. It aims at stating the important facts of natural reality (or in the case of religious painting, the facts concerning man's most important myths) in such an arrangement of colour and of form as to give pleasure to the beholder — or, as Thomas Aquinas said, *id quod visum placet*. The greatest painters are those who are most aware of their ability to transmute this skill in the rendering of natural fact, into some wide-embracing experience of life as lived. Thus the great painter is he who causes us to forget his skill in making (*recta ratio factibilium*) in favour of a complete re-creation of his experience in being the man he is and in doing certain things. Therefore great art has always a literary, or perhaps I should say a symbolic, side; it uses a repertory of forms for the purpose of saying something about life. Nature, as Delacroix said, provides only the dictionary; but the sentences into which the artist's words are combined, must be the artist's own.

Now the artists whose work Stieglitz has sponsored and championed, have uniformly given us what Gertrude Stein has also given us in literature, words of one syllable, without the connecting links of sense that other artists, concerned with extracting some significance from the American scene, are now engaged in supplying. Let us take, for example, John Marin. There can be no doubt that Marin has considerable gifts as a landscape painter. He is aware, for instance, that the landscape of America looks different from that of most countries in Europe; that where in Europe horizontal lines are not jagged and broken, but opposed by swelling curves, the structure of the

American landscape is always that of the broken and angular horizontal, that even the limbs of trees grow here differently from their European cousins – that they stretch out in angular parallels away from the trunk, rather than continue it in easy curves. On this broken and jagged line, frequently displayed in parallels, Marin has constructed a formula which – as the French Cubists have taught him to do – he applies to everything, from sail-boats to sky, and he has gone on repeating this formula for more than twenty years. He has moreover cleverly confined this new trick of technical rendering to the inferior medium of water-colours, where it is undoubtedly easy to handle – and has shown no disposition whatever to apply it to large-scale decorative painting in oils, or to use it as a means for conveying some vision of American environment that strikes in us a fundamentally human and racial note – as Winslow Homer before him, with less science, did. In other words, he is an incomplete artist, an example of the kind of arrested development especially fostered by New York under the direction of such people as Alfred Stieglitz.

And the same trait, the inability to use skill for the purpose of saying something significant and complete about American life in any of its aspects, the same evasion into the fragmentary and meticulously detached-from-life aspect of nature (which is the surest symptom of artistic decadence), exists also among all the artists Stieglitz has taken up. It exists even in his own photographs, as certain examples in this book about him will show. I recall going into his gallery early in 1927, when he was showing Georgia O'Keeffe, who has been his wife since 1924. The walls were hung with her usual abstractions – fragments of seashells, fragments of flowers, and so on. The exhibition affected me with a certain sense of monotonous boredom, and I began to regret I had come, when another young man, who had entered immediately after, began to cross-question Stieglitz himself, who was prowling around the room. He asked him the quite innocent question: "Can you tell me what these pictures mean?" Instantly, Stieglitz was in a fury. "Mean! Why should a picture mean anything? Can you tell me what a picture ought to mean?" And so on and so on. Instead of replying as he should: "After all, as a member of the public, I have a right to demand that a picture mean something to me", the young man, surprised by the violence of this attack, sought safety in a subterfuge. He said: "I suppose you want to sell those pictures. How can I buy them if I do not know what they mean?" – which enabled the offended art-apostle to remark: "Not at all. I do not sell anything. If you came and *asked me* for one of these pictures, because you liked it, and because it meant something important to you in your life, I might let you have it, but" – and so on and so on. I may add that I left without hearing the end of this discourse.

II

Such a character, it might be argued, is so obviously a product of metropolitan charlatanry that it is unnecessary to take him seriously – were it not that this book has now appeared to prove, on the testimony of no less than twenty-five witnesses, that Alfred Stieglitz has achieved something that is so characteristic of the American spirit as to be irreplaceable. It is necessary, it is in fact a public duty, therefore, to refute the statements in this book as well as to refute the man who inspired them.

We read, in essay after essay of this book, that Stieglitz is a manifestation of the American spirit. But what, in fact, is the American spirit? In what is by far the ablest essay here, William Carlos Williams points out that the natively American — as distinguished from the borrowed semi-European — has never been a unified force in this country. It has always been in more or less open conflict with its opposite, the element of the *acquired* European culture. And its development has therefore taken many forms. It took the form in New England and the Middle West, for instance, of an intensely Puritanic antipathy to all aesthetics: in the old South, it rapidly assimilated much of the colour of worldly "good living" of the English country-house aristocracy type; on the frontier it shaped, in Boone, Crockett, and Houston, authentic aboriginals who seem to be practically free from anything European, to be culturally and aesthetically autonomous. And there is also, as Dr. Williams ably points out, the Spanish and the Indian element to be dealt with.

In short, there is not a single American spirit, but several different kinds of American spirits. How, for example, can we reconcile the diversity of such examples of Americanism as Henry Adams, Brigham Young, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Cardinal Gibbons, Mark Twain, Charles W. Eliot, and Archbishop Lamy? It cannot be done. It follows, therefore, that the particular portion of American soil that is in closest contact with Europe, and most remote from the rest of a striving, pushing, struggling continent, is, by the nature of the case, most completely cut off from what Dr. Williams calls primary Americanism. And this spot is precisely New York, where Stieglitz has lived his entire life. In short, even if we grant the contention, made by the other essayists in this volume, that Stieglitz has done much towards releasing the American spirit through art, still the type of release that he has fostered has not been purely American. It has been the semi-Parisian, semi-abstract thing proper to a megalopolitan port of European call, such as New York is – and the very thing that Dr. Williams himself despises, and rightly.

But again and again we are told, by other essayists in this volume, that Alfred Stieglitz *is* America. Well, let us take certain examples of the sort of philosophy that his championing of the wrong kind of American art has led him to express. I quote from the essay, "An American Place", by Dorothy Norman, one of the editors of this volume:

> One has but to ask Stieglitz what An American Place is, to be told: "What is life itself? What does life mean?"

In short, Stieglitz here identifies the art he has fostered, with life itself – despite the warning of Goethe, many times repeated, that art is *not* life, but only knowledge *about* life.

> Someone after a conversation with Stieglitz asks him in wonder who he is. Stieglitz replies, "I am the moment. I am the moment with all of me and anyone is free to be the moment with me. I want nothing from anyone. I have no theory of what the moment should bring. I am not attempting to be in more than one place at a time. I am merely the moment with all of me."

A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose — let there be neither theory nor standard of differentiation between Cherokee briar or Talisman — the snapshot is the moment and Michelangelo is equal to Gertrude Stein.

A man stands before some paintings at the Place. He points to one picture that has been recently painted and remarks that he likes it better than the others, painted at an earlier stage of the artist's development. Stieglitz turns to him: "I suppose you like the full-blown flower better than the bud? I suppose you like the Beethoven Ninth Symphony better than the Beethoven Fifth Symphony? Such distinctions do not interest me. All my life I have been told such things: that sculpture is greater than painting, because sculpture has a third dimension; that painting is greater than photography, because painting has colour and photography is mechanical."

Matchsticks are therefore equal to marble — and of course it follows that a bathroom tap is better than the Parthenon or Nôtre Dame de Chartres.

What none of these contributors tell us is the simple fact that during the past decade, a group of American painters have arisen who have dealt with the American region in American terms, and selectively, not confusing life with art, nor persisting in an obstinate refusal to consider the values of one thing as opposed to another. In Thomas Benton, John Stewart Curry, Grant Wood, Burchfield, Victor Higgins, and a few others, the American spirit has shown it can stand free from Europe. With all this development, springing mostly from west of the Mississippi, Stieglitz himself and the whole host of the twenty-five who write so fulsomely here about him, have had nothing whatever to do. In fact, one of their leaders, Thomas Benton, has recently repudiated Stieglitz and all his works in a scathing essay.

III

There remains, then, the vexed question of photography. How far can Stieglitz's photographic work be called a development of art? What is the relationship of the camera to fine art?

The answer is comparatively simple. The artist is, in so far as he is expressing his human skill through a given medium, merely a responsible workman. He has to control his work so as to produce a certain definite effect. It is quite true that his work may, in the result, express some range of emotion and thought not common to most men; but this is in the work because of the artist's skill in putting it there by means of his power over formal expression; and unless this power is controlled at every moment by the artist's use of his skill, it will not appear in the finished work. Therefore the artist is primarily the skilled, responsible workman, the artifex, the maker of skill.

Now it must surely be obvious that, by employing the camera as a means of expression, the artist is thereby choosing a means that cannot be controlled, that is dependent, not on his skill of hand and eye, but on the accidental accuracy of a lens, of certain conditions of light and shade, of the sensitivity or not of certain chemical emulsions. It follows that those photographs which are most successful as art works are those which are posed by artificial light (which can be controlled) in a studio. Nor has the improvement made in the camera as an appliance made much, if any difference. As two or three of the contributors to this volume have pointed out, probably the finest photographs ever taken were certain portrait studies made by David Octavius Hill, back in the forties of last century, at a time when neither the lens nor the plate had been developed anywhere near to its present accuracy. As a practising painter, Hill knew what he wanted, and grasped what the highly inferior mechanism of the camera could give him; he therefore posed his sitters (they had to sit still for about three minutes) in such arrangements of lighting as a studio could furnish, and thereby produced some charming – if minor – works of art. But since then, the camera has done nothing but add a certain freakishness (strongly manifested in many of Stieglitz's own photographs) derived from contemporary vogues in painting, to the limits set in the forties by the great pioneer Hill.

The real future for the art of the camera, as the last twenty years have shown, lies in the field of the motion-picture. Here the camera-man, working in conjunction with skilled actors and a skilled director, can produce a series of pictorial compositions, linked together by movement and by alterations of scale and angle, that produce an effect akin to the art of music. The fact that so few really good motion pictures have been done, is due to the great difficulties this art has to contend with, for it is non-individualistic, stylistic in the sense that it rests on an arabesque of motive and idea in which several people (actors, scene designers, camera-men, directors, story writers) have all to play their parts in complete agreement. Nevertheless, the motion-picture, if it could be removed from the field of modern commercialism, could be transformed into the great art of our time. Certain fine pictures have been made, immensely superior to the ordinary run of camera-work. The ordinary camera, compared to them, can only achieve what is merely of a documentary interest.

Now Stieglitz probably despises the motion picture, and believes that he has really achieved as much by using a modern camera as Hill did in Scotland in the forties with his inferior instrument, or as the American war-photographer Brady did here in the sixties. I can only say that he is profoundly mistaken. It is true that he has lived long enough to see some of his own early photographs of New York take on a documentary interest. But so has Paul Revere's old engraving of the Boston Massacre a documentary interest – but it is not for all that a work of art. For the rest, his work represents the usual jumble of fads – imitations of the impressionists, imitations of the fragmentary type of artist he himself has supported, imitations, I suspect, of other photographers. It is all meaningless, because it is all unselective. It is American, true enough, if you admit that America must be a place without intellectual standards of any kind.

What remains? Irresponsibility in the place of responsibility; pretentious nonsense in the place of philosophy; a spoof cosmopolitan substitute in the place of the honest reality of regional achievement. Are we, in the rest of America, to put up with that sort of thing forever?

Regionalism in the Middle West

Joseph E. Baker

Definitely a product of our growing regional consciousness, yet not consciously a part of the regionalist movement, Ruth Suckow's *The Folks** raises a question of vital importance in American culture. It is a novel written to illustrate a theory, a theory that challenges certain assumptions which had become literary convention a few years ago. Very seldom does an author write a magazine article telling what ought to be done and then settle down quietly to devote four years to doing it. But to understand the significance of the very title of *The Folks* one must go back to an article by Ruth Suckow in *Scribner's* in 1930, where she protested against the superficial interpretation of America as standardized, lacking in variety, rootless. Her article was one of the manifestos of the year which marked the end of the twenties in a more than chronological sense:

> I do not see how it would be possible for any one to travel across country by automobile . . . and arrive at either coast with a remembrance made up wholly of noise, dirt, mechanical industry, and ugly provincialism. His memory of towns must be interspersed with that of farm lands teeming with abundance, crops of every description, deserts inhabited only by burrowing animals and fantastic cacti, great rivers, mountains, chasms, and forests. He must travel with the blinders of prejudice and

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* THE FOLKS *by Ruth Suckow* (FARRAR & RINEHART. 727 pp. $3.00).

preconception if he perceives only what is alike, and not what is different. He has driven through the brick-built, pre-revolutionary village of McVeytown, Penn., and through brand-new Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has caught varied glimpses of the spirit of the country in the settled prosperity of the plain frame houses of the Middle West and the delicate and forlorn distinction of white Southern houses in a pleasantly dilapidated landscape; in the new settlements of tourist cabins that shelter a huge nomad population; and those deserted mining towns where pack-rats scamper over decaying floors in shacks with broken windows. At the end of such a journey, the much-talked-of standardization of gasoline-stations and chain stores seems nothing but a hasty superstructure erected of necessity . . . to bridge the mighty gaps of an overwhelming variety.

But it is all American—no one can doubt that. Something deeply homogeneous binds together the extravagant differences. It comes out in the catchwords and slogans; . . . in the confidently friendly approach of strangers met by chance at the same table in a coffee-shop; in the final question of the waitress in the Western restaurant: "Have you folks had all you want?" Generous, easy-going, well-met, obtuse, and naïve, friendly first and suspicious only later—it is quite unlike the hard, integrated peasant simplicity of the folk of Europe. It is the "folks" spirit.

Thus she called upon the intelligentsia "to cease chasing 'folk art' and to understand the real basis of American civilization – the folks". "The whole matter may be summed up in this: the folk idea in America has become the idea of 'folks'." In the similarity and difference between the two words she finds the similarity and difference between the basis of European culture and what should be the basis of American culture. We do not have the customs of a peasant folk, but we have the equally colourful customs of the family, "the folks".

The Christmas-tree, lighted with candles and festooned with popcorn, with its tip touching the ceiling, held presents for everybody, later distributed by the most restless class of boys and the prettiest class of girls. . . . The schoolroom . . . decorated for the Thanksgiving programme with corn-stalks, pumpkins, autumn leaves, and pictures of turkey gobblers drawn in colored chalks on the blackboards. . . . The lore and legend so prized by the best Americans when it gilds the lives of the heroes of ancient foreign lands tried to make a beginning in the tale of George Washington's cherry-tree and Lincoln's funny stories. . . . No one could claim that the high schools were not likely centres of communal amusements. . . .

Yet this is the very period when serious division began. The rebellious children of this era grew up to be more rebellious still, until most of them broke away from the folks life altogether. When they searched for a folk art, they went elsewhere. People who would travel any distance to see the Spanish church processions in New Mexico, for example, are not apt to recognize the old Christmas Eve programme as in any way related to a church festival. . . . Today we have the spectacle of a whole tribe of aesthetic nomads, a flock of cuckoo birds, always trying to make their homes in nests that other birds have builded. Many have gone clear abroad; but even more are now abroad in their own country. New York, of course, is the stronghold; but there are a handful of other American cities where they may find an exotic, and therefore artistic, atmosphere—San Francisco, New Orleans, Santa Fé.

In *The Folks* the daughter Margaret typifies the aesthete who breaks away from the sane, prosaic life of a Middle-Western small town and is infatuated with the "artily Spanish" Santa Fé and the decadence of Greenwich Village – in New York, where "the past didn't count any more". In Spengler's language (for Ruth Suckow's photograph of the great city gives a concrete illustration of the analysis in *The Hour of Decision*) Margaret "sinks to the bottom" and becomes a part of the aesthetic underworld of New York, hating "ethical, religious, national ideas, marriage for the sake of children, the family, state authority". The novelist makes it clear that Margaret is nothing in herself: she is as completely devoid of artistic genius as she is devoid of brains and of normal instincts. She is attracted by any cheap and "smarty" fashion that can be made to sound shocking:

> Still, she wasn't going to be judged any more by Harry and Carl. They would be out of place among people who lived in New York and talked about music, and sex, and perversion. The wonderful Dr. Finkbein was interested –she could see it in the alertness of his eyes, and feel it in his body as he pressed close to her, breathing too near her face. Now it seemed that all the old values were overturned. . . . When she told them that she had been fired from the Normal, she achieved her greatest success. . . .
>
> Now the gin was gone and they were all eating hot dogs and drinking coffee out of chipped Italian pottery cups. Jane embraced Margaret, and hid her head, wailing. There was Lossie's apartment! Daggie had the key. Lossie had left it with him when she got a chance to go abroad as secretary to that woman with the sandals and fillets who was going to revive the ancient arts of Greece.

In this passage New York is satirized from the point of view of the "hinterland"; in contrast to the literature of the 1920's which preferred to satirize the "hinterland" from the point of view of New York. This is one of the chief differences between the Middle-Western writers who dominated the twenties (Anderson, Lewis, Dreiser, Masters) and the regionalists who are leading one of the live literary movements of the thirties. *The Folks*, lacking in suspense and drama, is not very important for its story, but it is important for the attitude of the author and the promise that perhaps the Middle West is beginning to stand on its own feet, to forget the inferiority complex which has afflicted its creative work up to the present.

The new determination to develop the cultural wealth native to each different region of America has come late to the Middle West, having already established a foothold in the South, the Southwest, and Old New England. At the very turn of the decade, in 1930, a group of Southern regionalists issued a manifesto under the title *I'll Take My Stand*. Since that, the movement has developed an extremely interesting body of critical discussion—giving currency to a new interpretation of American society, creating, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, the sort of "stir and growth" out of which may "come the creative epochs of literature". One of the most significant developments in this growth was the acquisition of an organ of expression when the *Bookman* was changed to THE AMERICAN REVIEW in 1933—particularly valuable because THE AMERICAN REVIEW is interested in cognate movements, such as Humanism and Distributism, which will tend to save regionalism from complacent provinciality and provide the needed cultural and economic accompaniment. The South has a number of regional periodicals of the very best type, but it was only a few months ago that the *Midwest* was founded in Chicago, protesting that this region, which has produced so many of the American novelists, poets, and critics for a generation, should abandon the self-deprecating attitude of a giant that fails to recognize his own strength. "Some day the Middle West will awaken to realize what a tradition lies behind it in American letters. And then it will stop letting New York steal its people to vitiate them with its stale culture, and exhaust them with its worn-out creeds." But the *Midwest* was weak just where THE AMERICAN REVIEW and the Southern periodicals have been strong: it failed to relate regionalism to other profound intellectual currents of our decade that are flowing into America from Europe – but are flowing around New York, leaving "our greatest foreign city" in a sort of Cockney isolation, still mulling over the "worn-out creeds" of the twenties.

Though the Middle West still lacks its own periodical, it does have individuals who are doing important pioneering work. Paul Robert Beath, one of this group who is preparing an anthology of regional tales, is a Middle-Westerner, and I know of no one who has phrased more neatly than he the difference between the regionalist and the Marxian views as to the immediate function of the artist in America. And in *The Folks*, by another Middle-Westerner, we have the first popular success in the new regional literature of the Middle West. It gives us an unsurpassed picture of the people of Iowa (and of Middle-Westerners in New

York and California) painted with a superb selection of the details which suggest the genuine atmosphere. And if we have got beyond the fashions of the twenties, this does not mean that we have turned back to the older local-colour school, for the local-colour school gave us nothing like this study of the socially typical:

> There was a dreadful wrench of loneliness in the onward-rushing noise of the train, in the rattle of the couplings, when at noon she went unsteadily through the Pullman coaches to the dining car. The coffee joggled in her cup, and not even the silver shine of the cover that the coloured waiter lifted with a cherishing flourish from her platter of sweetbreads could take away the solemn finality of the backward rush of country she was leaving. All the little towns they were passing made her think of home. . . . The train stopped, and she stared out at another brown-and-yellow depot, another town that—with its vacant lots across the tracks, and its asphalted street under shady trees leading to the business section past a dingy old frame house with a shingled tower—might just as well have been Belmond. . . . The country itself was shadowed over with the feeling that she could find no acceptance in it. It belonged to the folks and the folks' ideas . . . the great rolling country, where the rough stubble was getting brown in the fields, the autumn was drying the rich pastures.

But that is just the great defect of the novel. It does not show the folks' ideas. A sound regional literature would reveal what Middle-Westerners think; would recognize, for example, the political agrarianism that is continually springing up in the Middle West. Men, Ruth Suckow shows only in so far as their lives touch household affairs—and consequently she leaves the impression that Middle-Western business men never talk about business or politics! Her folks do not read — but publishers' statistics show that they do read. In 1930 she recognized that "The colleges were not set apart from the life of the 'folks'. They were right in the centre of it". But in this book about the only thing we are told concerning Carl in college is that he was so good-natured as to wash dishes for his landlady! His reaction to the world's ideas, which no one can escape in college, does not seem to interest the author. Now contact with college graduates in Middle-Western towns will show that college has made a great deal of difference to them. A true picture of the Middle West would not fail to show the high value it places on the traditional culture of the Occident — a culture originated soon after Greece had been the Wild West, transmitted by Rome when she was on the marches of civilization, developed by France and England when they were just out of the period of conquering a new "West". To be on the western centre of the white man's civilization has always been an advantage. But this novel would leave us with a conception of a Middle West which could never have produced the Middle-Western universities, could never have produced the Middle-Western symphony orchestras or art galleries or contributions to science, or the "Globe Theatre" Elizabethan staging of Shakespeare. Some critics have hailed *The Folks* as a complete picture of the Middle West. This is not only absurd, it is condescending, insulting, and ignorant, with the impertinent ignorance that we are trying to get away from.

A book that told us everything about Iowans would tell us everything about Herbert Hoover, Henry Wallace, and the School of Letters at the University of Iowa. What we are given is merely the same old picture used by the satirists of the twenties, with the satire removed – a photograph, real as far as it goes, but cut off across the top so that the men have no heads above the eyes. It still misses the inner reality which some future literary genius, looking with his own eyes, will see. What would we think of a picture of Scotland that left out the University of Edinburgh and failed to indicate the soil that grew Burns and Carlyle, or argued that Carlyle was being disloyal to his "folks" when he applied German thought to French history to point a moral for English "liberals"? His Scotch roots were perhaps deeper by the very height that he raised his head into the upper air, where the strong winds of his century were blowing – or rather the winds of the centuries, for Carlyle rose that high: he could see a "practical-devotional" monk of the twelfth century, and he could see the "New Spiritual Pythons, plenty of them", that America would have to fight; and he was none the less Scotch:

> . . . Enormous Megatherions, as ugly as were ever born of mud, loom huge and hideous out of the twilight Future on America; and she will have her own agony, and her own victory, but on other terms than she is yet quite aware of.

When Carlyle was in London, his roots were still in Scotland. He needed a strong grip. When our Middle-Western authors, before Ruth Suckow, migrated to New York, they preferred to transplant their minds, and it is little wonder that their "intellectual" life failed to go high, as it failed to go deep.

With the horizon shut in, with no perspective, a reviewer in a New York "literary" journal even today is capable of referring to our nearest past, the Victorian Age, as "primaeval"! Depth, height, and vision go together, and I am not sure that all of our Regionalists realize this. One of the mud-ugliest Megatherions we have to fight today is the deadly lie that we can separate the life lived by European mankind, in any given region of the world, from the past experience of European mankind, without paying the penalty of reversion to barbarism. *The Folks* shows us a land without any gentlemen, and happily that is not a true picture of the Middle West. Indeed, if we accepted the picture as final, we would have to assume that the Middle West could never produce a Sandburg, a Rölvaag, or a Ruth Suckow.

If we accept this picture as final, the Middle West will cease to produce Sandburgs, Rölvaags, and Ruth Suckows, for "nature imitates art", and a people tends to model itself upon the picture of itself which is conventionally accepted as sound. It is poor pedagogy for a prophet to say to unformed people: "You are incapable of rising above material interests and empty conventions; you are predestined to hopeless triviality; you are congenital lowbrows". The flattering answer comes, "Yes, I suppose we are," followed only too soon by, "And we are proud of it; what are you doing here?" – and the arts have a new enemy. Doubtless many a barbarian was confirmed in his barbarism by contact with an Alexandrian aesthete, only to be converted to the rudiments of European culture when he was told that he had a valuable soul worth saving. And when, centuries later, Hellenic culture, having lost its superciliousness, finally did reach the Northern peoples with the message that man is noble in reason and infinite in faculty, the results were encouraging. To the superficial sight of a Sinclair Lewis, what a ridiculous place Stratford-on-Avon would have been, infinitely more Philistine than Gopher Prairie, Middletown, Winesburg, or Belmond. And what conventional, dull, warm-hearted, narrow, awkward people Ruth Suckow would show us in portraying a shop-keeper's family devoted to wool-selling and social climbing. We might grant her that the Italianate Englishman, uprooted, is worse, and still wonder if we had the whole truth. Must we always have an opposition between "native" and "culture"? Might we not discover, even here in Stratford, something of a "native culture" not afraid to feed on ideas from distant lands and distant ages? Even in Belmond, Iowa, we suspect that there are some great books to read, and that someone reads them.

Or to take a closer parallel: Balzac in *Cousin Bette* says that the Slavic race "has spread like an inundation and now covers an immense portion of the earth's surface. It inhabits deserts where the free space is so vast that its peoples feel at their ease; it rubs shoulders with no other races (as the European nations do), and civilization is impossible without the constant friction of ideas and interests". We read that, and it sounds plausible, and we think immediately of the Middle-Western parallel, and we might be tempted to despair, had not Tolstoy shown us, from within, what provincial Slavic life is really like. After Tolstoy, it would be impossible to accept the neat and superficial generalization by the Parisian. But the Middle West has had no Tolstoy, so that it is still possible to give too much credence to what Stevenson called "the spectral unreality of realistic books".

This is not breaking a butterfly upon a wheel. *The Folks* is anything but a butterfly; it is a massive work of more than seven hundred full pages. Moreover, the novel has been presented to us with claims that challenge the comparison we have made, and it has been hailed by reviewers, in their generous way, as doing considerably more than it does. But if we recognize the limitations of the novel, and the dangers it suggests which confront Middle-Western writers in this crucial period of our literature, we must admit that what Ruth Suckow has done she has done well. She has given us an unusually faithful record of social transition touching four generations. So far as the characters are concerned, she does the social transition a little too well; they tend to be types, studied from the outside, sociologically, the Inhibited Carl, the Rebel Margaret, the typical Iowa retired banker going to California, the Communist challenging the mores of the folks, the rootless Hollywood-bridge-expert type of man, whom the author unfortunately refers to, quite seriously, as masculine. (Her men, as I have pointed out, are not whole men.) But if it is an external, "scientific" study it is at least not a caricature. And her scenes live. They catch the group spirit, the feeling, the atmosphere, of the Middle-Western farms, churches, streets, homes, band concerts, schools – presented not as if they were static, but changing, as living organisms change, with the growth of the century. The novel takes us beyond the satire of the twenties, and it is a promise of solider literature to come.

REVIEWS

Facts Without Philosophy*

THERE is one point of agreement between Distributists and Communists, between those who are trying to save America and those who are trying to overthrow it: both agree that Big Business has reached a stage of inhumanity that can no longer be borne; both agree that its claims to economy are a fraud, and that its claims to service are a fraud, and that its claims to having made our country prosperous are the biggest fraud of all. It would seem, therefore, that a book on the malpractices of Big Business, even though written from the Communist point of view, should make agreeable reading for a Distributist. But the present book is not agreeable. It is useful, and it provokes thought; those are the pleasantest words that can be said about it.

Partners in Plunder is written in a tone of steady anger. There need be nothing wrong with that, for there are things going on which might keep any man angry forever. But the anger of Messrs. Matthews and Shallcross is shrill and undignified. They scream and they kick people in the shins; but they never choose their objective, and time their blow, so as to knock a man down. They take a fact that is big and ugly enough to make a hole in a Du Pont, but they handle it so badly that in the end it goes off in their own faces. If you have a deadly case, why exaggerate? And above all, if the whole emotional basis for your case is that the American people are getting a raw deal, why write about that people as if they were a crew of nasty maniacs? At their very best, the American people as they appear in this book are "witless victims". At their less good, they are the sort of thing that emerges from the following description of our lower middle class (which makes up, I should think, a considerable majority of the nation):

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* PARTNERS IN PLUNDER: The Cost of Business Dictatorship *by J. B. Matthews and R. E. Shallcross* (COVICI-FRIEDE. 444 pp. $2.50).

> It is an awful thing to bestir the lower middle class from its customary doltish political placidity. Out of its psychiatric depths arises an ashen terror with strong overtones of homosexual sadism suggestive of appetites and powers held too long in leash.

If that is what the American people really seem like to these authors, why not encourage Big Business to poison or starve the whole sty-full of us as quickly as possible?

This attitude of hating the people you are out to help is characteristic of the Collectivist mind. The advocates of "planned economies" are always proposing to take a nation of "witless victims" and turn it into a nation of witless beneficiaries. The authors of *Partners in Plunder*, for example, write that

> the essence of a planned economy is the deliberate organization and correlation of the grand aggregate of economic resources and *of all its parts* with a view to the improvement both in quantity and quality of the general standard of living. Distribution of purchasing power

in such a way as to create an effective consumer demand for the goods of the system operating at capacity production is the quantitative side of the purpose in planning.

Could any statement make more clear the fact that underlying every planned economy is the necessity for an absolute dictatorship? How can any little group of experts undertake the "organization and correlation of the grand aggregate of economic resources and *of all its parts*", unless it is quite certain that orders will be obeyed? An economic planner is just another literary man, airing his dreams, unless he has the power to enforce his plan. And to enforce it in detail. For the man, or the committee, undertaking to organize and correlate the whole economy of the United States, both in the aggregate and in all its parts, cannot be bothered with citizens who have ideas of their own. The citizen who has ideas of his own in such a state is just as much of a nuisance as the private soldier who has ideas of his own during a war. And he gets the same treatment. In a planned economy, some bureaucrat has got to decide how many pairs of trousers the American nation is to have each year, and of what colour and quality; how many dogs, and of what shape; how many lima beans; how many pints of beer; how many prayer books, and of what denomination. And then if he finds that we are still wilful and erratic, thus making his job needlessly complicated, he'll soon decide how many children we are to have, and of what sex. And if the planner tells a woman who has been growing lima beans in New Jersey that she has got to move to Buffalo and start growing dogs, or if he tells a man who has been making beer in Milwaukee that he must move to Fall River and start making trousers, the woman and the man obey. If not, they are liquidated. The planner's problem is involved enough, without fussing over people who don't take orders.

The American people, in spite of all that has been said against them, are still not very good at taking orders. In the big cities, they may obey. And if the order is disguised, they may obey. (One of the most useful features of the book is the reiterated proof that a big proportion of the American public obeys meekly enough if the order is given in the form of an advertisement.) But once you leave the big cities, once you start giving, in the Mississippi Valley, the direct military orders that a planned economy requires, the American citizen is still likely to get ideas of his own. This is one reason, I think, why his Communist saviours hate him. The witless creature is offered a paradise of goods and leisure in exchange for a freedom that he has not really got. And instead of saying "Thank you", he shows signs of preferring to try and make the old American promise come to life. Could anything be more "doltish", more "suggestive of appetites and powers held too long in leash"?

The tone of this book is one of weak rage. The moral of this book is that there is nothing to do with a hundred and twenty million dolts except to plan an economy for them and then apply it to them whether they like it or not. Nevertheless, the book is well worth reading. It is full of facts that are worth knowing, and of accusations that are worth considering. And it contains a number of minor theses that are well supported. For example, the authors state:

> Advertising, in its spirit and purpose, is germinal fascism. Hitler was the first European politician who saw the significance of the techniques of commercial advertising for politics. In *Mein Kampf* he used the distinctly commercial word *Reklame*, advertising, to describe his political method. Advertising is more than sales ballyhoo; it is a form of social organization which utilizes the most modern mechanical contrivances for a regimentation that is both commercial and political.

That is well said, and there is much evidence to substantiate the statement throughout the book. But the authors never seem to realize that their own form of authoritarian state can make just as evil use of advertising as can the state of Hitler. I wonder whether their blindness to the shortcomings of Communism may come from the fact that they know no other escape, except Fascism, from the horrors of Big Business. If so, it would pay them to take a look at Distributist literature. For again and again the facts which they bring forward, and which they try to torture into a proof of the necessity for Communism, fit so much more simply into the Distributist argument.

On page 41, for example, the authors quote a Mr. Claude C. Hopkins on the difficulties he faced when asked to work up an advertising campaign in favour of Van Camp's evaporated milk. "Evaporated milk", said Mr. Hopkins, "is a standard product. It must be made to certain standards to meet governmental requirements. One cannot establish or claim an advantage on natural or standard products." And the authors of *Partners in Plunder* comment:

> There is the answer to our question in a nutshell. Where consumer standards have been set up, and intelligible specifications have been stated, the ground is removed from under the whole advertising structure, and the whole affair is reduced to one incredible and fantastic edifice of verbal rococo. . . . The making of wholly fictitious claims for their clients is the essence of advertising after it is stripped of all its magniloquence of "service" and cant about "the American spirit". Undermine the foundation for these fictitious claims of superiority by establishing *standards* – something to *test* them by – and a mortal blow is struck at the whole economy of waste.

In other words, pass some more laws, appoint some more inspectors, make one more step toward the planned economy. But if what you are trying to do is to get rid of the beastliness of modern advertising, the Distributist state, with its small-scale local production of consumers' goods, will produce the same result without subjecting us to a new litter of government officials. The authors themselves practically admit this, for on pages 131-132 they write: "In the days of simpler economy, purchasers of consumers' goods possessed a practical knowledge of the quality and utility of the things they bought that would, if it were widespread today, wreck the business and goodwill of many an industrial concern making consumers' goods." But the authors are "planners" at heart, and to a "planner" the idea of a simpler economy is an insult: it suggests that other people might learn to look after themselves.

One more word of praise for the facts in this book: the authors have given some of the best proofs yet available that the claim of Big Business to being economical, to producing consumers' goods more cheaply than could be done in any other way, is a howling lie. Mass production means national distribution, which means national advertising. As one example, out of the many to be found in this book, of the grotesque extravagance of such a system of production, I quote a passage dealing with bread:

> In 1931, an American farmer could take the proceeds of a bushel of his wheat and buy with it 7.3 one-pound loaves of bread. A Hungarian farmer could take a bushel of his wheat to market and return with 18 one-pound loaves of bread. The English wheat producer could exchange his bushel for 23.3 one-pound loaves of bread. The French peasant could come home with 42.4 one-pound loaves of bread purchased with the price of one bushel of wheat. After stating these significant facts of comparative bread prices, the *Consumers' Guide* hurls this challenge at the farmers and consumers: If you gave the bakers in this country – free of charge – all the ingredients they put into your bread, you would still be paying more for your bread than people in England, France, or Hungary pay for theirs!

Yet when Distributists plead that we should make more of our consumers' goods on a small scale, for local use, the answer given is that this would mean turning back the clock and lowering the American standard of living. But the loaves of bread bought by the peasants of France are not all made in a giant factory in Paris. The loaves are made in the nearest village. Yet the relative price of the French loaf, in terms of a basic commodity, is about one sixth the price of the American loaf. A standard of living which involves paying five or six times what a thing is worth might profitably be lowered.

HERBERT AGAR

The Returning Frontier *

AT THE famous Dayton trial of some years ago, one strange thing happened that did not get into the newspapers. Among the distinguished Northern visitors who came to look on or to bear witness to the glories of science were some who half-expected to be manhandled, if not lynched, by the barbaric hosts of Fundamentalism. But no such martyrdom took place. Whatever might be said of the extraordinary behaviour of Mr. Darrow and Mr. Bryan, the people of this mountain environment, the visitors observed, were polite and tolerant toward strangers. Furthermore, in direct contrast to what newspaper reporters were saying or implying, they were exceedingly intelligent, though perhaps technically unlearned, and, far from being dogmatic, they were eager to hear what could be said about religion and science and to debate the issues involved, even as their forefathers had debated the equally difficult issues of free-will and predestination. The visitors were disgusted with the lawyers and the reporters and possibly even a little ashamed of themselves; but for the mountain people they had suddenly gained new

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* BACKWOODS AMERICA *by Charles Morrow Wilson* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. 209 pp. $2.50).

respect. They had learned the difference between the outside and the inside view.

The inside view of mountain life seems nowadays to be steadily gaining. There is no better proof of this fact than the appearance of Mr. Charles Morrow Wilson's *Backwoods America.* To a large extent it presents material entirely familiar to those who have followed the literature of the subject – the *mores* of the mountain people (in this instance the people of the Ozarks): their speech, humour, feuds, amusements, occupations, folk-lore, moonshine liquor, and the like. Yet in Mr. Wilson's book an entirely fresh picture somehow emerges.

It is a fresh picture (and a true one) because he is able to make an approach radically different from that of his predecessors in this field. If such a book had been written twenty-five years ago, it would inevitably have been written by an "outsider"; and it would have told a tale of a romantic excursion among our "contemporary ancestors" – people who, however quaint and charming in certains ways, must be thought of as left-over curiosities, doomed to early extinction. If it had been written ten years ago, it would have had a doctrinaire, humanitarian, and sociological turn: it would have talked about breaking down isolation, routing the hookworm, and introducing the mountain folks to the modern improvements which then seemed to be conferring so much benefit upon Paterson, N J., and Cicero, Ill.

Not all of that nonsense is yet ended, but Mr. Wilson, at least, writes under the great advantage of knowing that it is mostly nonsense. In the first place, he is an "insider": an Arkansan born in the

Ozarks; an experienced farmer who has a college degree and can sell literary articles to the magazines as readily as eggs to the crossroads store; and a traveller who, like many Southern agrarians before him, has gone to Europe and to New England to look at other farmers' ways.

But more than that, he has the advantage of changing times. Backwoods America, it now seems, is not after all doomed to extinction; it only flourishes the more, as progressive and industrial America declines. As for the sociological and humanitarian benefits, some of which, of course, are not to be rejected, opinion now seems to be working around to a new basis of consideration, for people now seem less anxious to teach the mountain folks how to live than to learn from them how better to order their own lives.

What Mr. Wilson gives us, then, is frankly an inside picture of an agrarian society in a mountain environment. His sketches – for, however vivid, they are hardly more than sketches – are not data of folkways intended to gather dust on a museum shelf. They are notes on a people who follow a certain way of life more out of preference than from ignorance. The Ozarkers are a humorous folk, yes; but a man does not use his humour "to sell his hen's eggs, to acquire a soft job, or to swarm with the village social bees". They lack the jumble of professional knowledge which somehow finally leaves the highly learned man or woman of the cities "without intellectual anchoring"; but they have "idle time without unemployment" – or leisure for pursuits such as the "waning art of conversation". They have "a certain maturity of viewpoint, a result, perhaps, of seasoning in actuality, of knowing life with a tremendous intimacy". Then, too, a surprisingly wide range of knowledge is required for a man who must be a woodcutter or home craftsman in winter, a plowman and planter in spring, and later on a harvester and salesman of crops who will have occasion to know the ways of courts, laws, taxation, road and school building. The Ozarker is a fighter, of course, who may kill you on the spot "at a reflection cast upon the insufficiency of his vitals or at a suggestion of canine ancestry". But do not forget his unfailing courtesy and honesty. In the mountains no doors are locked.

To Mr. Wilson the Ozark country represents a "still surviving frontier" which will endure because it has a high content of survival qualities. It is also a refuge to which the dazed proletariat of the cities can flee, if they have the will to get along without movies and the spirit to enjoy liberty. Mr. Wilson tells about two such refugees. One of them is a "homesteader" who plans to live on a hundred dollars "cash money" a year. The latter is quoted as saying:

"Understand I'm not promoting a landward trend of population. I'm not an economist, not a statistics juggler. Frontiering, or farm-taking, or whatever you want to call it, is a matter for the individual to decide. It's mainly an issue between him and the earth he plans to use. But it's the finest life I've ever run on to. I believe about three Americans out of four would feel the same way about it, if they gave it a fair try-out. Maybe I'm wrong. That's what I believe."

That is also what Mr. Wilson believes. He is with those who argue that an American who wants to improve his circumstances has many more choices open to him than pessimists allow. But most of the choices lie in an agrarian rather than an industrial direction. One of them is the self-sufficient mountain agrarianism that Mr. Wilson here sets before us.

I do not mean to convey that Mr. Wilson has written an agrarian tract or drawn a Utopian picture. His book is descriptive and concrete, and not argumentative. He is well aware of the defects of the life he describes. But since life everywhere is bound to have defects, he prefers the defects of Ozarkadia to those of the metropolis. Herein lies the proper answer to Mr. R. L. Burgess who in an article in The American Review some time ago deplored the inroads of insect pests upon his own agricultural experiments. Yes, there are bugs in the Ozarks — also bad weather and sudden death. But one may prefer bugs on his potato vines to complexes in his subconscious.

At only one point would I question Mr. Wilson's treatment of his subject, and that is a minor matter of phraseology. Throughout the book he refers to the mountain people as "peasants". I should argue that this term is historically incorrect. Mountain people do not have the fixed status of the European peasant or his psychology. They are not conscious of belonging to a definite class which, though self-respecting, looks up to acknowledged superiors. The mountain people are thorough-going Jeffersonians. They acknowledge no superiors and never think of class distinctions. The word peasant simply does not have the right associations, though it does fit certain particulars of mountain life. The Negro tenant-farmer class constitutes our nearest approach to an American peasantry, but even these still have too much of the slave psychology to be true peasants. "Yeoman" comes nearer to fitting the mountain folks, but this word, like "peasant", has become a somewhat literary term. And so, though Mr. Wilson is represented, in the sketch on the book-jacket, as "no easy-chair agrarian", he must be found guilty in one instance of using an "easy-chair" term. That is the only defect worth noting in this modest and persuasive book, which deserves an additional word of praise for the excellent photographic illustrations by Bayard Wootten.

DONALD DAVIDSON

Conclusions as Premises *

TO THE author of this book the present is a time of crisis and chaos in philosophy. He believes that the difficulty which modern thinkers find in accepting each other's arguments or even in understanding them is due to their failure to agree upon principles of method, for we are still under the domination of methodological ideas inherited from the nineteenth century, when philosophy was in many ways assimilated to the pattern of empirical science. It is the aim of this essay to clear away what the author calls the inherited rubbish "left by the decaying systems of the last century". In other words, Dr. Collingwood seeks to get rid of the tyrannical rule which the method-

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* AN ESSAY ON PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD *by R. G. Collingwood* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 226 pp. $3.25).

ology of mathematics seems to him to exercise over the minds of philosophers.

Appropriately he begins with a brief discussion as to the nature of philosophy. He concludes that it is best described as an activity of the mind, a process marked by certain peculiarities of procedure, "a voyage of exploration whose end, the adequate knowledge of its proper object, remains as yet unreached". An account of philosophical method would enable us, he thinks, to answer the question as to what philosophy precisely is. This problem of method he considers to be of importance today, when "old methods are no longer followed and everyone is free to invent a new one of his own".

He takes four philosophers – Socrates, Plato, Descartes, and Kant – and discusses their contributions to the theory of philosophical method. The first three, relying on a method similar to that employed in mathematics, failed to devise a finally successful methodological technique, but Kant discovered that "the difference between mathematical proof and philosophical is that in the former you proceed from point to point in a chain of grounds and consequents, in the latter you must always be ready to go back and revise your premises when errors, undetected in them, reveal themselves in the conclusion". Although Kant did not succeed in learning his own lesson, "he laid a firm foundation for all future inquiries into the nature of philosophical method". It is at this point that the author takes up the problem.

On the principle that "thinking philosophically, whatever else it means, means constantly revising one's starting-point in the light of one's conclusions and never allowing oneself to be controlled by any cast-iron rule whatever", he subjects our traditional logic to a searching analysis. The concepts of genus and species, of definition and description, of quality and quantity, of deduction and induction are all carefully examined in an effort to disengage the relations of philosophy on its formal side and of science, whether mathematical or empirical. He concludes that what is called philosophy and what is called science are, from the methodological angle, two very different things, and he rejoices in "the discovery that philosophical thought has a structure of its own and the hypothesis that in its changes it is obeying the laws of that structure".

Leaving the details of the author's analysis to be examined by the professional logician, it is sufficient here to indicate that the book is a reasoned apologia for the rationality of philosophical thought. In checking his own belief that philosophers have never been quite satisfied with a methodology borrowed from mathematics but have somehow adapted it to the uses of their own science, he appeals to the experience of sixty generations of continuous thought, an experience "embodied in the history of European thought, over twenty-five centuries, including the pre-Socratics at one end and the reader and myself at the other". In other words, the appeal is to history.

But let us see how that appeal is made. Socrates (470-399 B.C.) and Plato (427-347 B.C.) first take the stand, showing how the ancient Greeks attempted to solve this problem of the method of philosophical inquiry. Then we have to wait till the time of Descartes (1596-1650) for the next witness, who is followed by

Kant (1724-1804). Thus, between the ancients and the moderns there is a gap of two thousand years, during which long period, the author seems to imply, there is to be found no philosopher worth listening to. Aristotle, it is true, makes several brief appearances in the course of the argument, but Aquinas is not even mentioned. Yet if there is one philosopher in the whole history of human thought whose name is the symbol of a definite method of philosophical discussion, that man is the great scholastic of the thirteenth century.

The modern reader, opening any work of Aquinas, cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the mediaeval thinker used a definite method. Each separate subject will be found divided into definite treatises (*tractatus*), each treatise into what are called questions (*quaestiones*), and each question into articles (*articuli*). The inner structure of the article is always the same, for the technique of Thomist argumentation is a constant. Each article, which is in fact a subsidiary question, is presented as a definite problem, and the possible objections are the first thing the reader encounters. In the actual treatment of the problem the special method of Aquinas is to lay down, first and foremost, a definite principle and then to show forth his solution of the problem as an illustration of this primary principle. In the end the various objections are appropriately solved.

To put all this in modern dress, the mediaeval philosopher employs what our author decries as the mathematical method. The mathematician starts with certain axioms which he holds as the result of definite elementary observations, and these axioms in turn become the syntheses from which the scientist proceeds to the most abstract speculations of pure mathematics. Similarly, Aquinas starts with an axiom of thought, a principle that cannot be gainsaid, and from this principle he proceeds to the abstract speculations of philosophy. In each case, that of the mathematician and that of the philosopher, the procedure is the same: first, the inquirer travels both the ideal and the empirical order *analytically*, and then he combines the results of this analysis *synthetically* so as to achieve a rational solution of his particular problem. In other words, there is one scientific method, and one only, the method used in mathematics and philosophy alike, the combined inductive and deductive method, the analytico-synthetic method.

Now, the author's treatment of this method and his account of its breakdown in philosophical work are not convincing. For one thing, he nowhere tells us what a method really is, nowhere explains the difference between analytic and synthetic, and nowhere dissects the mathematical method into its various parts. His own claim that in every movement of philosophical thought the *datum* (his word for the axiom or principle) never remains a fixed point and subsequently vanishes in its original form to reappear at the end in a new form, all this appears to us to be arguing in a vicious circle. Either such a *datum* is true or not true. It does not seem to be logical to say that it "must be defended by [its] success in explaining our experience". Take, for example, such a principle as "the whole is equal to the sum of its parts". Here is a simple proposition, of immediate certitude, expressing a relation of the ideal order and entailing a mental synthesis or union of two terms by a relation of identity which is seen to exist between them. This synthesis is spontaneously made by the mind which is irresistibly impelled to give its assent. The principle is in no need of being checked by experience, it undergoes no change in any argumentation in which it is employed, it does not vanish to reappear in a new form, and "the whole is equal to the sum of its parts" is the same at the end as at the beginning of the logical process.

It would seem, then, that the chaos and confusion which the author finds in modern philosophy are due, not to a failure to agree upon a philosophical method, but upon a failure to accept the first principles of thought. If the axiomatic data have to be constantly checked so that they dissolve in the solvent of experience and reappear in other forms, then they are not "first" principles at all. The author would have them to be fluid rather than solid, a claim that seems to make argument of any kind quite impossible. His view appears to be that "the arguments of philosophy, instead of having an irreversible direction from principles to conclusions, have a reversible one, the principles establishing the conclusions and the conclusions reciprocally establishing the principles". With this view no scholastic could agree, for he regards the principle as establishing the conclusion and the conclusion as illustrating, vivifying, and realizing in particular terms the truth that the principle sets forth.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that the author is not unmindful of the objection that he is arguing in a circle and that he endeavours to answer it in the last page of the book. His answer is humble; he says that he is compelled to assume that the sixty centuries of philosophic thought have had a rational meaning and a rational scope and that the only thing lacking would seem to be a rational method. In other words, just as scientists assume the rationality of nature, so he assumes the rationality of philosophic thought. If this assumption is not justified, philosophic tradition, he believes, is not an intelligible voice but only a chaos of discordant ravings.

Somehow we find this a strangely moving confession, so eloquently expressive is it of the fact that the modern man has been torn from his metaphysical moorings. In every department of life, our modern generation seems to prefer fluid assumptions to principles, a preference that gives much food for thought to anyone who looks upon the chaotic state of human society today.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

A Guide to Classical Criticism *

THE publication of Professor J. W. H. Atkins's masterly *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* ought to pave the way for a more purposeful study not only of ancient but also of modern literature. For during the last century literary study has increasingly become the prey of extremism. A surrender to historical relativism in our universities and to subjective "prejudices" in journalism has caused the majority of Americans, at least, to be indifferent if not hostile to the enduring elements of tradition, to "the best that has been thought and said", in a word, to quality. We have been concerned with the beginnings rather than with the end; we have been concerned with differences, either historical or personal, rather than with the universal elements without which literature cannot endure. No doubt this tendency in our universities has been favoured by the fact that most students of English literature are obliged to "take" Old English at the expense of the Classics, as well as by the absence of an exposition of the literary criticism of Greece and Rome at once comprehensive, scholarly, and intelligible to the general reader. Such a work, built on a multitude of specialized studies, Mr. Atkins has now made available. Granting, however, that one is interested only in the "best" – let us say the critical principles of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Longinus – what is the advantage of a comprehensive work including a consideration of dozens of minor figures? I fancy Mr. Atkins would answer that only by such a treatment can one obtain a proper perspective of the whole subject as a living organism, of the factors which have conditioned its growth, and of the complex interrelations of the theories involved.

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* LITERARY CRITICISM IN ANTIQUITY: A Sketch of Its Development *by J. W. H. Atkins* (MACMILLAN. 2 vols. 562 pp. $7.50).

What chiefly impresses a reader of Mr. Atkins's work is a characteristic rare today, especially in America, and that is its *balance*. He deals with abstract principles, yet he does not treat them in a vacuum. He pays proportionate attention to the extent to which criticism was conditioned by contemporary political, religious, social, and literary developments, yet he has sense enough and liberalism enough to avoid the extreme narrowness displayed by so many determinists, economic or otherwise, who pretend to be liberals today. Mr. Atkins admires and practises the historical approach, and calls attention to its shadowy beginnings in Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and others. Yet, conscious as he is that these critics were writing in a particular age and time, he is especially interested in those elements in their work which are timeless, which are universally valid in all times and nations; he knows that we are interested in them not *because* of but *in spite of* the peculiarities of their age and nation. Although the work is finely buttressed by deftly chosen quotations whose chapter and verse are cited in copious footnotes, one feels throughout that the evidence is vitalized by a constructive and interpretative imagination, that Mr. Atkins is not more interested in facts than in their meaning. Finally, whereas a sense of proprietorship and undiscriminating sympathy often turns an expositor into an advocate blind to the faults of the authors with whom he deals, Mr. Atkins's fondness for his authors does not prevent him from a judicious presentation of their shortcomings. He is a true liberal, as distinguished from the narrow propagandists who often masquerade as such: he is willing to consider *all* the facts bearing on the case in question; he believes in conditioning factors as well as an author's power of originating ideas; at a time when scholars are flying off on tangents, he endeavours to combine proportionately an explanation of origins, an interpretation of meaning, and an appraisal of values. He possesses *balance*.

Of especial interest is Mr. Atkins's able interpretation of Plato's central doctrines: such as his stress on poetry as an imaginative imitation of an ideal world and his exposition of the moral value of poetry as inherent in its power of educing the nobler qualities latent in the normal reader; again, his placing of Plato's attack on poetry in its proper contexture as a case of special pleading which does not represent his complete view. Interesting, too, is his exposition of Aristotle's theories, notably his stress on aesthetic elements, on the view that there are ascending scales of pleasure, bodily, mental, and spiritual, the highest being the combination of all three, as well as his stress on poetry as a "concrete expression of the universal, and therefore representative of the highest truth". Mr. Atkins's consideration of both the Greeks *and* the Romans gives him an advantage over Mr. J. F. D'Alton (in the latter's *Roman Literary Theory and Criticism*, London, 1931) in being able to demonstrate the organic continuity of Greek and Roman developments. I can think of but one shortcoming. Although there are brief bibliographical footnotes at the openings of each chapter indicating where the text of the critic's work can be found, it seems to the present reviewer that the value of the work as a whole would be much increased were it provided with critically annotated bibliographies of special studies which would serve as a guide to those interested in further study.

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